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JAPAN FACES DESTINY

WHILE our eyes are inevitably fixed, day after day, on Moscow, a crucial decision in the drama of this world-wide war hangs in the balance at Tokio. After the fall of the relatively moderate Cabinet of Prince Konoye, the new Ministry under General Tojo has been installed with impressive ritual solemnity. Japan is on the eve of a choice which may govern her destiny for generations to come. The new premier, accordingly, after praying in the temple of the Sun-goddess, went to perform ceremonies at the shrine of Admiral Togo, who ranks high among the ancestral patrons of this theocratic empire. The choice seems significant, for the Admiral, the victor of Tsushima, is the Japanese Nelson, who incarnates the fortunes of this island people at sea. Is this, then, a petition to the ancestral spirit for naval victory in the struggle with the United States, which General Tojo may intend to risk? As yet he has made no public declaration that throws any light on his intentions. Japan stands for "peace, justice and righteousness," but is conscious of her "glorious historic mission," and will "bravely face realities." The General comes from the most determined group of the forward military school which has for many years controlled the army in Manchuria. He has taken as his foreign minister the most decided exponent of the pro-Axis orientation in the diplomatic service, Mr. Togo, formerly ambassador in Berlin, where he married a German wife. While the country is being prepared for an intensified struggle and Tokio gets ready for an attack from the air, it is unlikely that any precipitate action will be risked without another effort, if only for form's sake, to come to terms with Washington.

There can be little doubt that the Axis is urging Japan to attack Russia, with the double purpose of cutting off American supplies from Vladivostok and of immobilising Russia's army in Siberia. Some of its divisions are reported to be already fighting round Moscow, but it numbers about 1,700,000 men and has its own separate sources of supply east of the Urals. There can be no doubt that the German advance into Russia is far behind the Staff's time-table, and that the losses have been and continue to be enormous, and perhaps even crippling. On the other hand, if the attack on Moscow proceeds slowly and doubtfully, the advance into the industrial Ukraine, which has now reached Stalino, goes faster. More ominous still is the threat to Rostov-on-the-Don, which is now menaced from Taganrog, forty miles away. If the German southern armies could take Rostov and then press on to the Volga port of Astrakhan on the Caspian, they would cut off Russia's armies and her mechanised agriculture from the oil of the Caucasus, whence she draws about 75 per cent. of her supplies. In this situation a stab in the back from Japan might have just that disastrous effect that Hitler desires.

How will America react? Public opinion is much readier to contemplate war against Japan, as the Gallup polls show, than total war against Germany. The President, on the other hand, has confessedly tried to placate Japan, in order to reserve his forces for the Atlantic. The theme of the "freedom of the seas" is now dominant in all that the Administration says and does. It is fairly certain then that the Navy would act at once if the Japanese were to interfere with American supplies for Russia on the way to Vladivostok. It is not at all so clear that there would be any decided American action, if the Japanese armies in Mongolia, Manchuria and Korea, said to have been recently reinforced, were to strike northwards. Nor can we be quite sure what, if anything, America would do if the Japanese were to establish themselves in Thailand. There would doubtless be more help for China, perhaps in bombers, and a further stiffening of the trade embargo, but would there be naval action? It is this uncertainty which makes it likely that the Japanese will strike, albeit with caution, for they know America's naval strength. Our own view is still emphatically that the best contribution America could make at this moment to the Allied cause would be to veto any aggressive move whatever by Japan, by the plain intimation that her Fleet will strike at once in concert with ourselves, the Russians and the Dutch.

It is not yet realised, either here or in America, how vast Hitler's ambitions are. Their inspiration is drawn from Haushofer's pseudo-science of Geopolitik; Eurasia is not two continents, but a single, continuous land-mass, which air-power and mechanised armies can dominate, more especially in the North, much as a supreme navy dominates all the seas of the world. The attack on Russia was not merely an expedient for getting oil and wheat. It was a step towards this dream of a Eurasian empire, which Haushofer may have planted in Hitler's mind when he used to visit him in prison after his abortive *coup-de-état* at Munich in 1922. As far back as November, 1940, Hitler in his talks with Mr. Matsuoka in Berlin warned him that Japan may one day have him for a neighbour. The clue to this at first surprising prediction will be found in an illuminating article by Mr. John Scott in the *New Republic* of September 1. Mr. Scott, who left Moscow two weeks before the German attack on Russia, had had many talks there with German officers and diplomats. They outlined the coming campaign with complete frankness. The political plan, they said, was to set up Quisling governments in the Ukraine and the Caucasus. The rest of Russia, European and Asiatic, brought to terms by the loss of vital resources and the destruction of its armies, would be placed under a regime of a Vichy type. Over this Vichified eastern half of Eurasia the Germans would secure the right of passage for their troops and would establish a garrison in Vladivostok. So far, Mr. Scott. It is obvious that if this plan could be carried out and if Japan were simple enough to aid it, German power might decide the fate of China, not to mention India. Such schemes cannot be defeated by local defence in the Middle East. They can be met only by an active and organic long-range plan of campaign which envisages the whole vast area, and deploys for the common good all the forces of America, the British Empire, Russia and China.

The Home Front *(by an Industrial correspondent)*

The thousand or so shop stewards who met in conference last week-end in London were a clear sign of the rapidly growing strength of the rank and file movement in the factories. The Conference was banned by the A.E.U. Executive and officially disapproved of in Trade Union circles, and of course the Communists had a good deal to do with organising it. But the main body of those who attended were not Communists, or "fellow-travellers," as the phrase goes. They were properly appointed Trade Union shop stewards, representing a great mass of regular Trade Union opinion. That the Conference pronounced so decisively for the opening of a Western front against Germany was probably due to Communist, or near-Communist, management of the agenda. But this management was possible because there is a very large body of working-class opinion that is shocked by our failure to make any military move while the Russians are grappling with the whole weight of the German army and air force. Whatever the validity of the reasons for this inaction, it is undoubtedly having a great effect on public feeling about the Government, above all in the workshops, where even the workman who is no friend to Communism feels about Russia quite differently from the way he has felt about other countries which Germany has overcome. That is why it is possible for a great conference of Trade Unionists to declare without any dissent in favour of pushing dilution to the farthest possible point, and to demand to be worked harder in the interests of higher war production.

* * *

Unless the Trade Union and Labour Party leaders understand the strength of this feeling, and take steps to guide it, there is a grave danger that, despite all the errors of the Communist Party since the outbreak of war, the leadership of rank and file working-class opinion will pass increasingly into their hands, now that they have constituted themselves the champions of an intenser war effort. They have the advantage of knowing exactly what they want, and of not being held back by any inhibitions resulting from the presence of their leaders in the Government. As long as they go on saying emphatically what so many people feel to be right and true, they will continue to gain adherents for their policy in the Trade Unions. I feel sure it is mistaken policy on the part of the Trade Union leaders not to recognise this, and not to make some effort to put themselves at the head of the shop stewards' movement. Of course, the difficulty from the official standpoint is that a stewards' movement based directly on the workshops is a potential rival to the regular Trade Union committees and councils, which are based on branch organisations not organically connected with any particular factory. In my view, it is the fatal weakness of official Trade Unionism that, in many industries, it does lack this organic connection. This was the lack which led to the independent development of the shop stewards' movement during the last war; and now exactly the same thing is being allowed to happen over again. The individual stewards are Trade Union representatives; but unless they are allowed to join together over a wider basis than the single factory in their Trade Union capacities, they will inevitably join together unofficially, and nothing the Trade Union leaders can do will be able to stop them. Then, if the Trade Unions will not lead them, the control of the movement will pass to whoever will give them the lead they want—and that, as things are, means first and foremost the Communist Party. Surely the Trade Union leaders can see this, and understand the risk they run of losing control over their members unless they give them a clear lead and a means of expressing their sentiments.

Mr. Bevin has announced that the existing system of reserved occupations is to be replaced by a system of individual reservations. This is a most important decision. In view of the announcement that there is no intention of increasing the total strength of the army, it presumably does not mean that there is to be any large net release of labour for the armed forces. What it should mean is much greater elasticity of interchange between industry and the armed forces—for example, the return of a number of sorely needed coalminers in exchange for the release to the army of an equivalent number of men now reserved, but not engaged on really essential work. Under present conditions, the army is always demanding fresh men to make up for wastage through discharges of men whose health will not stand the strain of army life. But this is highly unsatisfactory for industry, both because the men released are not the productive equals of those taken away, and because there is no assurance that they will go, on release, where they are needed most. The making of reservations an individual matter will, of course, give the Ministry of Labour a much greater power over the workers than it has possessed hitherto; for the man who refuses to go where he is wanted, or to pull his full weight, will be in constant danger of having his reservation cancelled. This new move therefore means a further curtailment of industrial freedom; and if it had been proposed early in the war there would have been storms of protest from all over the country. Now, I suppose, there will be hardly any protest; for this sort of control over labour is essential to the totalitarian war effort which the workmen's own delegates are loudest in demanding.

Colour-bar in the Empire

The Anti-Slavery Society's paper on the Northern Rhodesia copper belt must be taken seriously by Parliament and the Colonial Office. The Committee which wrote it was no Home Guard company of ill-equipped amateurs, but a heavily gunned tank with a crew including Miss Margery Perham, Professor Macmillan, Dr. Audrey Richards, and Sir Alan Pim as assistant. By the time it has rolled courteously but conclusively over the Copperbelt Disturbances Report, that monument of irresponsibility is mashed flat. That Commission of Enquiry may have sympathised with—or been intimidated by—commercial corporations and European trades unions, all determined to debar Africans from becoming skilled craftsmen or executives. The Anti-Slavery Committee bases itself upon the official statement that the Government are opposed to the colour-bar and offers constructive proposals to remedy the colour-bar which the Government permits in the mines. These include a body to represent native labour, training in native trades unionism, increase of labour officers, better wages and workmen's compensation. They agree that European miners who are serving in the war should be reinstated. But in 1939 they numbered 3,000; the natives 26,000; there should be technical training for the natives, and until equality of opportunity and wages is established, immigration of European miners should be prohibited and skilled jobs should be open to Africans on a lower wage level. Again, the Committee points out that an industrialised native population is now permanent, and that Government should provide social services for it, among them farming plots and agricultural education, decent houses for family life, with preferential treatment for married couples, education for children. The Committee points out that the royalties on the copper go to the British South Africa Company—absentee owners—that the profits of the mining companies are taxed in London by an absentee Government, and that these levies could pay for the social services.

We ourselves draw further conclusions from this memorandum. The minerals of colonial areas should belong inalienably to the State as trustee for the native peoples; and beyond a reasonable return (if they must be leased to concessionaires) their profits should be directed to native welfare and development. As it is, the main resources of these countries are exported to enrich European companies; and the natives, while they gain by employment as cheap labour, sink to an urban proletariat, while the tribes, drained of their men, break up and starve. Secondly, although the Anti-Slavery Committee does not say so, the most sinister feature of the Copperbelt Report was the acquiescence of the Northern Rhodesia Government in the colour-bar. If the officials agree with the government of Southern Rhodesia, they are in disaccord with the basic principles of British administration.

Tension in the House. *(by a Parliamentary Correspondent.)*

In the Lobbies "aid to Russia" is the constant topic. Bevin's statement that the position is desperate and we must increase the output of our factories by 30 or 40 per cent. has been the subject of much cynical comment; many Members, including Wardlaw Milne, who gave this exact estimate and was rebuked by the Premier for doing so, have long urged just these considerations on Bevin when he was asserting that things were going well enough. There is considerable tension in the House.

The Government's proposals for improving allowances of soldiers' dependents were severely criticised by every speaker in the debate. Why the Government should base these allowances on the "relief" principle no one can understand; it was suggested they desire to perpetuate the means test as an element in post-war reconstruction. The publication of the Gort Despatches has not had any effect on the question of a new front in the West, since that is already too late in any case. Members are more concerned to refresh their memories of the Members of the present Government who had full responsibility for that shocking disaster.

Though the Government refused to discuss the war situation in the House, ministers like Lord Croft, George Hicks and Lord Halifax can make vitally important statements in the country or abroad. The Prime Minister always emphasises the sovereign rights of the House, but the issue rose in a sharp form in the debate on Morrison's refusal to grant an exit permit to McGovern, chairman of the I.L.P., to go to Ireland in pursuit of his parliamentary duties. Morrison, in a lengthy platitudinous speech, ended by saying that while he would not grant this permit at the request of the Member, if Cahir Healy, the man whom he had imprisoned under Regulation 18B, made the request on McGovern's behalf he would consider granting it. This bewildered almost everyone. The Prime Minister had to intervene, but Aneurin Bevan, who followed him, in a singularly able speech, made a strong case for his view that the incident marked a further stage in the process whereby the Executive increasingly undermines the position of the private Member. Morrison seemed not to be refusing this permit because it was against the national interest; but rather he refused it because he could not convince himself that it was in the national interest—a very different thing.

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AMATEUR STRATEGISTS

A MAJOR decision on the strategy of the war has been taken, and the time has passed when it is profitable to argue the case for the alternative policy of a diversion in the West. This journal made this clear enough last week, when we said that Lord Beaverbrook's promise of very large supplies of all kinds to Russia (provided they can reach the front) rules out for a considerable period any possibility of an initiative in any area where supplies are not already adequate. It is an odd fact that during the whole period of the Russian-German war when we have discussed this problem, no criticism has reached this office from any responsible person. This week, when we had agreed that the opportunity no longer existed, a strong letter of protest comes to us from Commander King-Hall, with whose general view about the nature of the war and its political strategy we have usually been in substantial agreement.

The "amateur strategist," is rightly regarded with suspicion, and it will be worth while briefly to consider why we, in company with the *News Chronicle*, the *Daily Herald*, the *Evening Standard* and other papers, including by implication, the not ill-informed or reckless *Times*, have held that the best use was not being made of the opportunity afforded by the German attack on Russia. Note first what our contentions have been. First we have repeatedly said that without the more detailed and technical knowledge no proposal for any particular "front" could be made by any responsible person. We were not in fact very prone to make this particular error; deep-seated hatred of war and a vivid realisation of its horror, not only in Russia to-day, but during the last ten years in many countries has made us as loath as anyone to advocate any extension of the battlefield. Further, the experiences of Narvik, Dunkirk, Greece and Crete have not conditioned us to anticipate good results from ill-equipped and inadequately led expeditions. Our argument in favour of a new front was due to the special cause that we believed that the invasion of Russia offered an opportunity that was unlikely to occur; that if we could seize that opportunity it was possible that the war would not be prolonged until European civilisation was in dust and ashes, while the use of that opportunity merely to strengthen our British and Imperial defences offered the probability of a long drawn-out agony in which there was no very discernible strategy of victory on either side.

Let us briefly recall the course of events. Mr. Churchill's great speech on the day after the German offensive against the U.S.S.R. effectively forestalled any open expression of anti-Soviet feeling and was everywhere welcomed as a sincere declaration of policy. When the Government sent, as Dr. Dalton has now revealed, large consignments of goods and equipment to Russia; when the R.A.F. was prepared to lose heavily to withdraw some of Germany's fighters from the East and to co-operate with Russia on its Northern front; when British and Russian troops joined hands in Iran—in all these actions we saw reason to hope that the prejudices that had divided the two countries and permitted Hitler once again to attempt the tactics of "one by one" were at length to be frustrated by the determined co-operation of the Governments in London and Moscow.

Anxiety was first expressed in these columns and elsewhere when it became clear that the experts were mistaken, that Russian resistance would be stubborn and protracted, and that a uniquely favourable situation was developing in Europe. A strategy of bombing invasion ports, drawing off German fighters, and of improving our position in the Near East and in the Battle of the Atlantic, no longer seemed adequate when we discovered that Hitler had had to withdraw the great bulk of his troops to fight in Russia and had left in the occupied territories a military force which, working with Himmler's Gestapo, was inadequate to suppress the wave of sabotage and other demonstrations of anti-Nazi feeling that appeared in half a dozen European countries. If indeed, we asked, there is no equipment for utilising an opportunity when the Navy and the R.A.F. have absolute supremacy in the West and the populations are ripe to welcome aid—if such a moment cannot be utilised, how can Hitler ever be attacked? The question was surely not unreasonable.

Even so, the official view that an offensive adequate to draw troops and aeroplanes from the East, was impossible, would have been accepted as conclusive had it not been for a variety of disquieting events. No one doubted, and no one doubts now, the sincerity of the Government promise of "all aid to Russia"; the doubt arose whether certain ingrained states of mind did not prevent that aid taking the most effective form. The long delays in sending promised American-British Mission to Moscow revived unpleasant memories of former hesitations in British-Russian negotiations, and suggested that the American and British governments still feared that Russian resistance would not last long enough to make it worth while to risk sending supplies. Further, Lt.-Col. Moore-Brabazon was allowed to maintain his position as Minister of Aircraft Production after an indiscretion that could only do grave harm both in Moscow and in the British factories under his charge. Then followed the speech in which Mr. Churchill spoke of invasion as probable at any time after the beginning of September (which seemed to imply the assumption that Russia's effective resistance would be ended by then). This impression was intensified by a strange article by Capt. Margesson and by the Premier's reference to the satisfactory prospects of our Christmas dinners at a time when most of us were sick with anxiety about the slaughter in Russia, and the grave threat to Leningrad. Subsequent utterances failed to remove this unfortunate impression. Lord Halifax seemed specially remote from what Mr. Bevin now acknowledges to be a "desperate" situation, and the latest remarks of Lord Croft suggest no understanding of the issues at stake in Russia and of the tragedy of failing to aid those who are in revolt in Europe.

Nowhere did we discern in official utterances a realisation of the vital necessity, if the Nazis are to be defeated, of co-operation with our 100,000,000 potential allies now stirring throughout Europe; everywhere there appeared a dogged inability to see in the Russian alliance a new hope and an opportunity for revising the strategy of the war in collaboration with Russia. Throughout the German-Russian War the tendency seemed to be to regard the Russian war as a heroic sideshow, not crucial to the result of the war, but to be maintained as long as possible. We protested against the use of the phrase, "aid to Russia," whether used by the Right or the Left. The problem was not one of giving aid to Russia, but of collaborating in the most effective and speedy way with the one ally capable of resisting the German war machine and capable of raising up other resistant forces throughout the Continent of Europe.

We have said enough, we hope, to explain to Commander King-Hall and to other critics why we, constitutionally reluctant to assume any such responsibility, felt it our duty to point the urgency of the moment and the grave danger of neglecting it. This is no matter of sentiment; we have not much patience with an attempted moral argument that the amazing fortitude of Russia's resistance entitles the Soviet Union to some special consideration. All that is beside the point; Britain did the resisting when the U.S.S.R. did not during the last two years. Morals and sentiment are not the question, though the consideration that the popular nature of the Russian Army and the people's belief that are defending a country that belongs in a special sense to themselves, is a highly relevent consideration in this struggle. We return unrepentantly to our position that as long as Russian resistance can be maintained the odds are against Hitler, but that even the enormous losses he has incurred in the East will count for little in military terms if he has time to consolidate his economic gains. The problem still remains of how to stop Hitler's "one by one" tactics simultaneously by mobilising the powerful, but still uncoordinated forces of resistance.

CAPITALISM AND EUROPEAN RECONSTRUCTION

GOVERNMENTS and parties in exile are apt to lose touch with the movements of opinion in the countries which they are supposed to represent. This fear, and this peril, are very markedly present to-day both among the Governments of the countries which the Nazis have overrun and among the Socialists and other opponents who have found refuge in Great Britain. For all these exiles know in their inmost minds, even if some of them seek to deny it, that the eggs which Hitler has scrambled in Europe can never be unscrambled, and that, whatever the military outcome of the war may be, there can be no return to the *status quo ante* of a Europe divided into a little host of nominally equal and independent sovereign States.

Hitler had begun scrambling these eggs long before the outbreak of war, with his policy of economic penetration of the Balkans, and the Danubian Succession States. He had struck with these countries bargains which, unequal as they were and all to Germany's advantage in respect of the terms of exchange, were nevertheless welcome to the peasants of Eastern and Southern Europe because they offered what no other great country was prepared to offer—assured markets for such surpluses as the peasant cultivators were able to purchase, and therewith at any rate *some* command over sorely needed industrial supplies. The peasants were concerned not so much with finding favourable markets as with finding any markets at all; and, when Hitler's Germany was ready to buy their goods in exchange for German industrial products, they were not disposed to look at all closely at the terms of exchange. Great Britain, tied by the Ottawa agreements, and the other countries of the West, determined to protect their own agricultural interests, offered hardly any market at all to the agricultural producers of Eastern and Southern Europe. Nazi Germany did offer a market; and on this basis the Nazi emissaries were able to carry all before them.

This simple fact largely explains the feebleness of resistance to economic and political penetration in Central and Eastern Europe both before and since the outbreak of war. Resistance did occur, in spite of this economic factor; but it came late, and was enfeebled by internal dissension. The situation was not the same in Czechoslovakia, or in Western Europe, as in the peasant countries; for in the industrialised areas Germany appeared less as a buyer than as a formidable competitor, intent on subordinating all European industry to German control. But even in these countries there were cross-currents, and some industrialists and financiers were disposed to prefer cartelisation under German suzerainty to either the futile economic nationalism of the pre-war decade or the vague hopes of internationalism which the economic organs of the League of Nations ultimately failed to secure.

Indeed, the German order, at any rate until it manifested itself in brutal military conquest, did shine, in a purely economic sense, by contrast with the disorders of European national protectionism on the morrow of the great slump. It did seem to be a way of unifying a large section of the European economy, if not the best way; and both peasants without markets and industrialists in fear of "foreign competition" were apt to prefer a commercial *pax Germanica* to a perpetual guerilla war of capitalist countries in which the smaller groups were bound to get the worst of almost every contest. The Germans had a plan, of sorts; whereas the Western democracies appeared to have nothing at all to offer. Accordingly, resistance to German economic penetration came to be unhappily identified with a do-nothing policy in face of general depression; and the readiness to strike even unfavourable economic bargains, rather than none at all, weakened the will to political resistance.

It is among the major difficulties of the exiled Governments and party leaders that they are largely identified in the minds of their own peoples with the sterile economic bickerings of the pre-war decade. Inevitably, since the outbreak of war there has been in one invaded country after another a recrudescence of nationalist feeling, which is naturally directed against the Nazis. The exiles, of all political complexion, try to turn this feeling to account, and rely on it to keep a place open for them in their own countries on the morrow of Hitler's defeat. But they are all the time uneasily conscious that events may not work out in this way; and their uneasiness is greater than ever since the Soviet Union has become a party to the European conflict. For some, at any rate, of the exiled Governments—the Dutch Government is an outstanding example—are deeply conservative and completely dominated by the capitalist outlook; and even their progressive elements still for the most part envisage the economic and political sovereignty of their own States in the Europe of the future, and are fearful of any super-national movement which, in subordinating their States to any wider European order, may sweep them and their parochial policies away.

Politicians who think and feel in this manner have had their hearts uplifted by the clause of the Atlantic Charter which appears to pledge the restoration of sovereign independence to each of the pre-war States of Europe as the war aims of two, out of the three, major Powers ranged against Nazi Germany. But they are uneasily aware that the third Power—the Soviet Union—whatever its spokesmen may be saying for the time being, stands for a very different solution of the problem of Europe. The Soviet Union is itself a super-national State, ordering its affairs over an immense area by means of a common political system and a common economic plan; and the exiled politicians of the smaller States are well aware that, if Hitler is beaten, the Soviet Union is bound to play, throughout Eastern and Central Europe, a large part in the settlement, and to throw its weight on the side of international unification and against a return to the "Versailles system" of nominally equal States, of all sorts and sizes, each free to pursue its own national policy without regard for the external effects. They are aware not only of this, but also that Europe ought to be unified in the basic economic institutions—power, transport, and the exchanges between industrial and agricultural areas. They are aware that Hitler's idea of a Europe dominated by Germany and run in effect as a German "farm," can be successfully combated only by an alternative plan of unification, based on the equality of men within the Governments, and in an attempt to develop, by common action, the entire continent.

The crux of this problem, for the countries now ranged against Nazism, is the question of international investment. The capitalist idea of foreign lending is that it should be done at a profit to the investor, and that every investment must promise to yield an adequate profit. All over Eastern and Southern Europe, there is an uneasy realisation that the backward areas are most unlikely to be successfully developed on these terms. The returns to investment in backward countries are largely indirect: they come back not to the capital invested in a particular railway, or power-station, or industrial undertaking, but in a general enlargement of the market and a higher level of exchanges between the manufacturing industries of the advanced countries and the agricultural and extinctive enterprise of the less advanced. An investment plan is needed which will take account of indirect as well as of direct returns and which will aim at raising the standards of production in the more backward parts of the continent. For this, agriculture must be improved, and the population surplus must be employed in newly developed industries.

In this country and in the United States there is already talk of a "Lease-Lend" arrangement for the investment of American and British capital in these economically backward areas. The plain English of this is that investment in the required scale will not take place unless it is made free of interest, at any rate for a number of years. But interest-free investment is possible only under Government auspices, with recourse to the taxpayers to meet the necessary charges; and the question is how far Great Britain and, more especially, the United States, will be ready to lend in this crisis, trusting to be recouped by the indirect advantages of increased trade and a higher level of production over Europe—or even the world—as a whole.

This question of post-war investment gets inextricably mixed up with the problem of feeding and otherwise sustaining the war-devastated peoples of Europe during the period required for a thorough recovery of productive capacity for peace-time products. The capitalist who is prepared to help in revictualling Europe on a basis of free gifts, made by Governments, may be exceedingly reluctant to contemplate any "Lease-Lend" scheme which goes beyond the immediate period of post-war hunger. He may want to give Europe short-time help in order to prevent sheer starvation and yet be very reluctant to stretch this kind of aid beyond the first, short phase of the coming European reconstruction. He may be wholly against providing long-term capital except for economic enterprises which can be made strong enough to stand on their own feet. But, in practice, investment limited in this way is very apt to mean no investment at all.

The battle that is now being fought out, behind the scenes, by the protagonists of British and American capital and by the spokesmen of the less advanced States, is at bottom a battle about the whole basis of the future economic order. The anxiety of the more conservative and capitalistic elements both in Great Britain and in the exiled European Governments to come to terms quickly with the United States is the outcome of a fear that events may pass them by, and that people will look rather to Russia for the principles of a new European order which will sweep them aside and give the unification provided by the Nazi system without the racial exploitation which underlies it.

A LONDON DIARY

CAREFUL reading of Gort's narrative produces mixed feelings. Here are the characteristic English virtues—steadiness, even phlegm, amid gathering disaster, a self-restraint which discloses only the barest minimum of anything that might reflect on our French allies, that typical concern for our men's welfare which provided them with a mobile bath unit while it neglected to supply them with modern tanks. The main story was, of course, already familiar, but some new facts emerge in sharp perspective. We are enabled for the first time to picture the confusion of the last days of the lost battle, when no one knew what was happening beyond the range of his field-glasses. Weygand imagines that his paper plan for counter-attacks from North and South on the flanks of the Nazi thrust is actually in operation, and believes that Amiens has been retaken. In London the War Cabinet, equally deluded, sends instructions to Gort as imperative as they were impracticable. But the conclusion which stands out most clearly is, of course, that everyone on the Allied side, British as well as the French, was fighting the last war over again. Britain's single armoured division arrives in France only after the battle is lost. Gort had at his disposal only 23 more or less modern tanks: the rest were midgets armed only with a single machine-gun; the number of fighter 'planes was negligible. Everyone, including Gort himself, thinks in terms of defensive "lines." Neither the Spanish nor the Polish campaigns had driven home the new conception of a dynamic war of movement. When, with fatal folly, the French seemed to be taking the aggressive in the advance into Belgium, it was only to quit one prepared "line" along the frontier for another so-called line which turned out to be non-existent. The facts about the lack of equipment of the B.E.F. no longer surprise us. But the explanation of that was neither treachery nor criminal negligence. The responsible authorities just didn't realise for what sort of war they had to equip our Army, and the French were, if possible, still more antediluvian in their thinking.

The conclusion which people draw from these documents is not, as Lord Moyne imagines, favourable to Government strategy; it just makes them ask why seventeen months after Dunkirk we should still be short of equipment.

* * *

Lord Woolton's statement on Tuesday seemed to me to mark a really important advance towards the principle of rationing according to need. Uniform rations for the civilian population had never proved workable; extra milk was always necessary for babies and expectant mothers, extra cheese for miners and land workers, and many other examples of differential rationing were necessarily admitted. The new proposals extend the principle in the case of children and heavy workers. Restaurants and canteens for heavy workers will get three times as much meat, manual workers on less strenuous jobs will get twice as much as sedentary workers. Miners and land-workers who have been going very short are promised further advantages. The milk for children scheme is to be extended to cover four and a half out of five million elementary and secondary school children; and school feeding is no longer to be confined to 300,000 children, and to be carried out by the local authorities, who are apparently to be compelled if they won't play up, and to be encouraged to do so by the provision of pots and pans and stoves—serious needs in village halls. Getting more food into the country than anyone expected this summer has encouraged the Ministry of Food, which, in spite of mistakes, has always seemed to me more alive than most Departments. A small proof that detail does not escape its observation was that the problem of "sliced bread" for canteens, to which I referred recently had, I found, been settled on the day before my complaint appeared.

* * *

I am glad to hear that James Clark, the author of the article that was published in this journal entitled *From the Technician's Point of View*, has now been taken back in another factory with the same kind of work and with the same status and pay. The Association of Scientific Workers took up the case of Mr. Clark with the Ministry of Supply, who appear to have behaved very sensibly in the matter. I think they, Mr. Clark and Dr. Swann, who told the story at the British Association, are to be congratulated on vindicating the right of an employee to criticise factory administration and to suggest remedies for muddles.

* * *

A friend of mine who is a member of the Brains Trust told me an interesting story of an experimental Brains Trust session held last week at a great aerodrome. Here no fewer than eleven thousand human souls, including a thousand W.A.A.F.s, are gathered together on the wind-swept East Anglian plain, remote from any centre of even approximately civilised life. Like the great country houses of the eighteenth century, they provide very largely for their own needs, and with their own laundry, bakehouse and brewery, provide pretty well. Nor do they do so badly in the matter of entertainment, and with their own dance hall and cinema live a rich social life involving, my friend was told, as many as three cocktail parties a week. Still, there is a certain amount of "inbreeding," and the general sociological and psychological "lay-out" is in some respects not dissimilar to that of outpost stations on the frontier of Empire; which makes it all the more surprising that, when a lecturer comes from the world outside, the lecture should be so poorly attended. It is with the greatest difficulty, so my friend was assured, that a couple of hundred men can be "beaten up" to listen to even the most distinguished lecturers. But a Brains Trust Session is not a lecture, and nearly a thousand men gathered to the experimental sitting, at which three men selected by their fellows at the aerodrome, joined my friend, to answer questions. And highly significant some of the questions selected were. They raised and discussed with complete frankness the fundamental questions of religion, and asked whether it had any part to play in making the world after the war; and they discussed whether the reorganisation of the economic life of this country should be on Communist lines. They wanted to know how far discipline was good for an army. These questions were "vetted" in advance by a Committee consisting of representatives of the Ministry of Information and the Y.M.C.A. and of the Air Commodore himself. Such honest discussion is, I suggest, highly creditable, and I cannot deny myself the pleasure of contrasting the atmosphere in which the asking and the unfettered answering of such questions is possible, with the traditional atmosphere of the regular Army. The R.A.F. has long had the reputation of being the most enlightened of the Services, but the asking and answering of these questions constitutes only an advance instalment of tendencies which are everywhere at work. A new ferment is stirring in men's minds, and whatever sort of world it will be after the war, it will at least be a different one.

* * *

Like Joad, I find the B.B.C.'s musical revives utterly empty. They have no virtues; they are not beautiful or baudy or funny. They give Goebbels a case for talking of democratic decadence. But in fairness I want to add that there is a great deal of music that is worth listening to on the British wireless, and I agreed with a speaker on the wireless who said that never before had people in this country listened to so much good quality music or so much attempted to produce it. The "Tipperary" stuff of the last war has not the same appeal to-day; but serious music, like painting, has met with a wider and more sincere public. I think the B.B.C. technique for aiding the musically untrained—which includes most of us—to understand what music is all about, is partly responsible for this. And there are programmes which show imagination and the capacity to use the wireless medium to the best advantage. MacNeice's pageant of the Temple on Sunday night was a good example. From the first performance of *Twelfth Night* in the Temple, one moved back to Drake's visit and to the Templars pledging themselves to destroy the Infidel, with as much ease as if one were watching a film; and the use of Dr. Smith's organ as the link was carried over on Purcell to Johnson and Goldsmith and Lamb, and finally to the destruction of the organ itself in the blitz. To my mind the end of this broadcast was bad. God knows we have all plenty of reasons for arraigning Hitler, but to pronounce anathemas on him for deliberately destroying the Temple (one of the few Churches I really cared for so much that I sometimes attended it) seemed to me rather absurd—especially when we have recently bombed Nuremberg and Naples. Personally I prefer Purcell to anything by Wagner—even the Meistersingers, but I insist on recalling that all of us, and not only the Germans, are now engaged in the joint work of destroying the traditional culture of Europe. Perhaps we can't help it, but at least we can avoid kidding ourselves that in some way or other British bombs, unlike German bombs, do not destroy the glories of the past. Presumably they do.

* * *

There is a pleasant story going the rounds of a Protestant Rector and a little Belfast boy.

The Rector : "Now, my little man, who made you?"

Urchin : "I'm not made yet. Me father and me big brother are made, but I'm too wee."

(*Note :* To be "made" is to become a Member of an Orange Lodge.)

The Rector : "No, no. I don't mean that. Has nobody ever told you that God made you."

Urchin : "Did He now?"

The Rector : "He did. He made all of us."

Urchin : "Me father and me brother and me wee sister?"

The Rector : "Yes. He made everybody."

Urchin : "Did He make the Papishers too?"

The Rector : "Certainly. He also made our Roman Catholic brothers."

Urchin : "Aweel, He will be the first to rue it."

CRITIC

THIS ENGLAND

A 5/- prize for the first entry in this column goes to W. Davis.

Paste entries on postcard or slip of paper and give details of origin. Address to THIS ENGLAND, 10 Great Turnstile, W.C.1.

We Welsh Baptists do not deny that members of the other religious bodies are travelling to the New Jerusalem; but they are third-class passengers whereas we, in virtue of our having been baptised by immersion rather than by a process of mere sprinkling on the forehead in early childhood, are manifestly entitled to the privileges of first-class passengers. We are not prepared to share such privileges with other denominations.—From a religious article in the *Western Mail.*

A friend told me the other day of a conversation she had overheard between two Chesterfield women. One of them remarked: "I suppose you will soon be called up?" "Oh, no," replied the other. "But surely you will be included in the next age group?" "It's quite unlikely," said her companion, "You see, I'm not interested in the war."—*Derbyshire Times.*

Christian tradesmen or two sharing a bed can have lodgings.—Advt. in *Belfast Telegraph.*

The greatest Army manoeuvres ever held in Britain have just ended with the battle of Bedfordshire. Fighting for nearly a week led to the complete defeat of an enormous force which was supposed to have invaded England from the sea.

Realism reached such a pitch during the operations that no fewer than 19 officers and men were killed in accidents. The total number of deaths may prove to be even higher.—*Daily Telegraph.*

And the first task of Superintendent Jack Sands and his detectives last night was to find a motive for the murder of a regular churchgoer.—*Daily Express.*

The surplus household appointments, including a costly dining-room suite in oak, a near replica of King Arthur's Round Table.—From notice of Public Auction in the *Henley and South Oxfordshire Standard.*

ALLIED CONSCRIPTION

THE promised Bill to enable Allied Governments in this country to apply to their Nationals resident here compulsory powers of military service has not yet appeared, nor have the Government's proposals for dealing with this particularly delicate and difficult matter been indicated. It is known that conversations between the Governments concerned have been proceeding, but not whether they are yet concluded nor what lines the discussions have followed. These issues raise important questions of constitutional principle, of international law and of individual liberty and conscience. It is much to be hoped that never again will a Government allow itself to present to the House of Commons so undigested, ill-considered, and badly drafted a measure as was the Maritime Forces Act before it was modified by the patience and persistence of a House of Commons Committee. The Home Office and the Law Officers were at length compelled to consider the nature of the problem; to make up their minds how they proposed to deal with it; and to draft it in a form reasonably fitted for its purpose. All that will on this occasion, one may hope, be adequately considered before the Bill is presented.

There is really no dispute about the objects which these measures are intended to secure. The short point is this. Shall persons in this country who are not British citizens and who are therefore not subject to conscription under British Law thereby escape the obligations which others bear? Everyone agrees, including nearly all those concerned, that they should not. A simple way of achieving that object would have been to enact that the British legislation should apply to all aliens domiciled here with the exception of enemy aliens. In that way the obligations of service would have been equated with the privileges, if not of citizenship, at least of hospitality and protection. As the obligation would have been in all respects the same as that of British subjects, administered within the same laws and by the same machinery, its equity would have been beyond dispute, and it is difficult to imagine any practical difficulty which an option to join one or other of the Allied Forces would not have solved. That, roughly, was the method adopted during the last war.

The Government has explained why, in those parts of the problem with which they have already dealt, they have not applied this principle. Whether the argument is a good or bad one—and for myself I think it raises more questions than it answers—the Government are unlikely now to depart from it. They have adopted it in the Allied Forces Act, the Maritime Forces Act and the Diplomatic Privileges Act; the Service departments have followed it by refusing foreign volunteers unless the consent of the Allied Government concerned was first obtained. The argument is that it is not sufficient that Allied Governments driven from their soil by Nazi aggression, and thereby prevented from exercising their sovereign rights should continue to receive formal diplomatic recognition; so far as we can empower them to do so they should be enabled to continue in the exercise of Sovereign powers as though they had never been driven out. A most attractive proposition, though, quite apart from the limits imposed by geography, admittedly impossible to apply fully; we could scarcely contemplate, for example, the use of the British Treasury's machinery to collect Dutch income-tax.

There is a crucial difficulty and injustice which I hope the Government will avoid. To apply such a principle to military conscription without drastic safeguards would be to give the Allied Governments in exile powers that they could not have exercised had they remained undisturbed at home. If I take Poland as an example, it is not because the problems that arise in that case are not to be found in one degree or another elsewhere, but because all of them are to be found there: some of them to a degree and extent not found in the other cases. In one case the issue is vital to the future of that unhappy country. There are in Britain substantial numbers of people who fled or whose parents fled from Poland. Some of them fled in recent years for political reasons, perhaps having committed political offences for which, even in normal times, the Government concerned could not have asked their extradition. To hand these persons over now by compulsion of law to the unfettered Sovereign powers of the Government from which they here took refuge would be a strange means, and a strange result, of the fight for freedom. Many are persons who left Poland in recent years, not as political offenders or dissenters, but as refugees from a bitter and apparently endless quasi-racial or religious persecution. These men are quite determined that they will never serve in the Polish Army. They left Poland because, spiritually, Poland cast them out. They were determined never to see Poland again. They are eager to fight Hitler and his Nazi hordes; they recognise this as the fight for civilisation itself. But for them to fight this sacred fight in the Polish Army side by side with those with whom they have never been allowed to share equal citizenship, and under the orders of men whom they still associate in their minds with the old anti-semitic Poland would be sheer sacrilege. They will not do it, if we imprison them: they will not do it, many of them, if they are shot for refusing. Is it wise for us to compel them? Is it wise for the Poles? For the sake of some punctilio of national *amour-propre*? Surely it would be wiser for us, certainly wiser for the Poles to say to these people: "You are living in the past. All that is dead. The new Poland will be free. But we recognise that the spiritual distortions inevitably produced by the crimes and follies of the past are not so easily or quickly straightened out, even by the sincerest of pledges. Fight; but fight where you will. And accept this free option which we give you as an earnest of our determination that the bad old days shall not return!" I can think of nothing which would contribute more to the prospect of a happy Polish future. Certainly the men would be better soldiers in an army of their own choosing than in one in which they would be determined not to serve.

Finally there is the largest class of all, to which most of these considerations likewise apply. They are people who have no practical connections with Poland at all and whose Polish nationality—but that the Polish authorities are entitled to determine it—is in any case doubtful. They are people born in what is now Poland before the last war or of parents so born. They have never been in Poland, or never since early years. They know no Polish. They have no Polish friends or relations; Poland to them is a geographical expression. I know one such. He was taken to Vienna at the age of two. At the age of 27 he was seized by the Nazis and transported with thousands of others to the Marshes between the Prussian and Polish frontiers. He was expelled by the Germans for being a Pole: he was denied entrance to Poland because he was not a Pole. They lived there in conditions of indescribable horror for many months. Then he escaped to London, lived there several years. Then he was arrested here by the Poles and conscripted into the Polish Army. I got him out, because they had exceeded their power. But an unlimited power of conscription would give the Poles the right to conscript many thousands of such persons.

The only satisfactory way of dealing with such problems is, I think, to give every man affected by these proposals an unfettered option to join the British Army instead: of course, in fighting units. No other solution covers the ground in existing conditions. The measure should also provide the same exemptions, postponements and appeals as are provided by English law, ensure that penalties are not more drastic than ours, and make certain that disputed questions of jurisdiction should be decided in our Courts.

S. SYDNEY SILVERMAN

HEINE AND THE GERMAN REVOLUTION

THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION published several months ago Heinrich Heine's prophecy of the Nazi revolution. This prophecy seems to explain the revolutionary belief of the mass of the Nazi followers and, moreover, the spiritual link connecting the Nazi movement with the mass of the German people. There can be no doubt that such a link exists—though it might better be called one of the means by which the leading Nazi clique got a hold on the German people, beside the terrors of the Gestapo and the concentration camps. (The leading clique itself—which includes many more men and women than the internationally known men at the top!—has scarcely a "belief" of any kind; no "belief" does and can exist in a gangster mind.) The fact that Heine with his prophecy was called as a witness in the Preface of *Black Record* emphasises the political importance of this prophecy; for Lord Vansittart represents a section of British public opinion which helps to shape British foreign policy. Can Heine really be used as a witness for the solution of the "German problem"—of the problem of a country which has contributed to the building of modern civilisation and which is now the country of the Nazis?

Closer study reveals that the solution is not quite as easy as it seems to be on the surface. Heine's prophecy closes his *History of Religion and Philosophy in Germany*, which he first wrote in French for the *Revue des Deux Mondes* in Paris. He tried to explain, to the French, Germany's religious and spiritual history, to show that Germany's "virtues" and "vices" are not "unrelated" to each other. This is quite contrary to Lord Vansittart's view; and thus it reduces already in itself Heine's value as a witness for Germany's "Black Record." It is exactly this "relation" to German "virtues" which gave the leading Nazi clique a spiritual hold on the German people. But, unfortunately, it affects in turn those very values which have been Germany's contribution to modern civilisation, because the Nazis have used and continue to use these values simply as means for their own criminal ends. It is one of their most far-reaching and earliest crimes.

Heine's value as a witness is diminished further by misunderstandings which may arise from the translation. According to the "Preface" of *Black Record*: "They (Frenchmen) do not love you in Germany, which is almost incomprehensible, since you are so lovable and took such pains during your stay in Germany to please at least the better and fairer half of the German people. And even if this half loved you, it is precisely that half that does not bear arms, and whose friendship, therefore, would be of little help to you." The expression "better and fairer half" (*bessere und schönere Hälfte*) has a very definite and only one meaning in German: it means the women. In other words, the ironical lyrical poet Heine is making one of his jokes on the "amorous" French during their "stay in Germany," i.e. during the Napoleonic occupation. Unfortunately Lord Vansittart, who quotes the last sentence of his quotation in italics, apparently thinks that Heine was referring to those Germans (in his view a politically insignificant minority) who then were democratic republicans of various shades.

But it is exactly about the forthcoming democratic-republican revolution that Heine's prophecy is speaking: and not only by implication, but outspokenly and directly. And the whole work strives to prove that the democratic-republican revolution is the necessary, methodical result of Germany's history.

This correction clearly makes the German problem not less, but more, complicated. Why did Heine's prophecy not come true with the democratic-republican revolutions of 1848 or of 1918 (in so far as the latter had been a democratic-republican revolution at all and not a breakdown or the counter-revolution)? Why did it come true (in no small degree) with the Nazi-revolution? The answer is very simple: Germany's spiritual and political history did not stop after Heine had written; in the meantime something very important had happened affecting the mass of the German people—though certainly not the officers of the Imperial Army with its "crack cavalry regiments" or the corresponding fashionable ("Old School Tie") students' organisations, all of which belonged doubtless to the social stratum responsible and representative for a lot of Germany's "Black Record." This factor which affected the mass of the German people was Marxism.

Nowadays, in using the term "Marxism," one cannot be quite sure that everybody means the same thing. It is better, therefore, to drop for a while the "-ism" and to think more of the original thoughts of the Marx who answered, when he was asked whether he agreed to the views of his son-in-law Longuet: "*Moi je ne suis pas Marxiste!*"

Marx's thoughts are the direct result of German classical philosophy. It was in the same decade in which Heine had closed his survey on Germany that the young student Marx was enchanted by the "grotesque rock-melody" of Hegelian philosophy. In his book Heine emphasises Hegel's importance and calls him the greatest German philosopher since Leibniz.

Hegel's philosophy systematised human Ideals and Values, showing their logical development in a "dialectic" process. On the historical plane this process is called by Hegel the "progress in the consciousness of Freedom"; and this progress was for him the meaning of World-history. As the dialectic process was not shown by itself, but only in the abstract garment of logical categories, Hegel's pupil Marx thought that this philosophy was standing "on its head"; and so he put it "on its feet." That is all that Marx did; but what does it imply?

Marx turned from the abstract-logical categories to Man—as he exists in Reality as a human being. This shifting from Hegel's abstract-logical "Idealism" to the Real Man—nothing else!—is Marx's turning-point towards "Materialism." As man always exists in reality in certain (changing) historical conditions, Marx called his philosophy "Historical Materialism." But just because the real-historical man is the centre of this philosophy, it is as concerned as Hegel's "Idealism" about Ideals and Values, though not in their inherent qualities. The functioning of man's (historically changing) Ideals and Values is the basic problem. Why and how do certain Ideals and Values function in certain historical conditions of mankind and why do they not in others? In trying to answer these questions the philosopher Marx turned to the economic plane, because he found the "anatomy" of human society of his time in its economic structure. It is quite wrong to consider Marx's beginning as a philosopher merely as of biographical interest; he remained a philosopher while devoting his life-work to social, political and economic problems. We mean the word "philosophy" not only in its most fundamental sense, but in the "active" sense of the German classical Idealistic school. Heine as a contemporary knew still of this "active" trend of German classical philosophy. That is why he foresaw the coming revolution "in the world of phenomena." It is exactly because Marx found that the structure (that is what the metaphor "anatomy" meant) of human society of his time made it impossible that certain human and humane Ideals and Values could "function" in it, that he became a Socialist. The fact that Marxian philosophy asks for the "functioning" of Ideals and Values and not for Ideals and Values themselves is certainly the reason which gave it the reputation of being "heartless." It is nevertheless the functioning of human and humane Ideals and Values which is its heart!

There can be no doubt that the "-ism" has poured much water into this wine of Marxian philosophy; but there can also be no doubt that the essential flavour of this wine is its human and humane character. It became widely circulated among the German people—even among those authors who thought themselves to be very strongly anti-Marxian! It is, however, not the authors who matter—not the average German professor of Philosophy who up to the Weimar Republic (which brought only the few exceptions proving the rule) did not care to have first-hand knowledge of Marxian literature. He did not understand the deep meaning of the sentence with which Friedrich Engels closed his book on Feuerbach (*Ludwig Feuerbach and the End of Classical German Philosophy*): "The German Workers' Movement is the heir of the classical German philosophy." The Workers' Movement had to be crushed in order that Germany could become Nazi Germany! X.Y.Z.

DOUBTING THOMPSON

I REMEMBER reading some years ago of a small boy who, on being asked in Sunday-school which of the Apostles it was who at first refused to believe that the Resurrection had taken place, replied: "Doubting Thompson." I think I wrote about him at the time, but he and his answer came back into my head the other day when I stumbled on yet one more example of the incredulity of the human race—an incredulity that is even more amazing than its credulity. And it seemed to me that Doubting Thompson was an excellent name for the kind of modern man who will believe nothing outside his own experience—not even that a raw potato carried in the hip pocket or (better still, it is said) next the skin cures rheumatism. I have met a number of people lately who cannot or will not believe that it is possible for four people, using only two fingers each, to lift a heavy man from a chair half-way to the ceiling—a parlour-game described a few weeks ago by Professor Joad on the wireless. It is easy to dissipate their doubts, of course, if enough people are present and there is a chair handy; but until they have seen fourteen stone of flesh hoisted skywards with no support but eight frail fingers they remain sceptical. The evidence of other people's eyes—of other people's experience—is nothing to them. And even when the Doubting Thompsons have been convinced in regard to one thing, they go on being Doubting Thompsons in regard to others.

There are still, for example, an extraordinary number of people who doubt the existence of ghosts. I have never seen a ghost, and do not know what is the explanation of their appearance; but people whom I know and whose word I trust tell me that they have seen them or spoken to them, and I see no more reason to doubt the truth of what they tell me than if they told me they had seen a golden oriole. There are, I admit, people whose word I would not take on the subject either of a ghost or of a golden oriole. But, if a cool-headed and unsuperstitious woman who is a female edition of George Washington tells me that she saw a ghost, I must believe her. It was a woman of this type who told me how she once saw a ghost on the landing of a lodging-house. On her way downstairs she stood aside to let an old lady pass who said gently: "Don't be frightened." When my friend got to the sitting-room she said to her mother: "I wish Miss Day's lodgers wouldn't wear rubber shoes. I've just met an old lady on the stairs who appeared so silently and suddenly that she quite startled me." When the landlady came in afterwards to lay the table, she was asked who the other lodger was, and she replied that there was no other lodger. Then, on hearing a detailed description of the old lady, she fell back into a chair, white and trembling. She said that, many years before, one of her lodgers, an old lady exactly like the one seen on the landing, had been burnt to death as a result of a paper catching fire, and that the apparition must have been her ghost. I for one do not doubt this. Of course, there is always a lingering doubt at the back of my brain; but, on the whole, I cannot doubt the existence of ghosts.

On the other hand, I do not doubt the occurrence of fraudulent ghostly phenomena; but that some ghostly experiences are real seems to me probable. Even the late Frank Podmore, most eminent of sceptics on such matters, declared in one of his books—I forget which—that the occurrences associated with the name of that noisy spirit, the poltergeist, were as genuine as they were inexplicable.

At the same time, it may have been a mark of wisdom to doubt—temporarily, at least—the existence of ghosts, witchcraft, and things of that sort. G. K. Chesterton once said that the genuineness of witchcraft was one of the best-attested things in human history; but the belief in witchcraft led to such orgies of fear and cruelty that the world was better without it. Ghosts, too, were objects of terror, making countrymen afraid to pass certain places in the dark. No one in the old days would have ventured to address a ghost genially as "Old chap," as Conan Doyle did. Conan Doyle spoke to spirits, indeed, as you might speak to children whom you were trying to persuade to be reasonable. Not that he thought them all as charming as children. On the only occasion on which I met him he said to me: "The mistake people make about spirits is that they think of them as angels, whereas most of them are the riff-raff of the spirit world." Even so, he did not fear them, and, perhaps, if human beings ceased to be afraid of ghosts, doubt of their existence would cease to be a virtue.

There is much to be said in favour of a good deal of doubt, however. If it had not been for doubt, we should be even more ignorant than we are. It is generally accepted that it was a good thing for Copernicus to doubt that the earth is the centre of the universe. It is generally accepted, too, that it was a good thing to doubt that the earth is flat. I have leanings myself towards the flat-earth theory and the old Ptolemaic system; but facts are facts, and I yield to men who know more about such matters than I do. How admirable a thing it was, again, for men to come to doubt the divine right of kings and, later on, to doubt the divine right of property! If only Eve had doubted the word of the serpent, we might still be in the Garden of Eden. Alternatively—an appalling possibility—we might never have been born.

Every age is, I suppose, an age of doubt from some point of view. Even the ages of faith had their doubts if it was only concerning the uses of bath-water. The mid-Victorian age believed in Moses and doubted Darwin. The present age believes in Freud and doubts Moses. Some ages, however, seem to be more prolific of Doubting Thompsons than others. I fancy that the recent years between the two wars were more conspicuous for doubt than most. There was an increasing doubt of the old standards, good as well as bad. Agnosticism to a great extent displaced religion, though, as a fervent atheist once argued with me, a true agnostic would doubt, not only the existence of God, but the non-existence of God. Public men doubted the need for a League of Nations. Military men doubted the usefulness of tanks, though this had been proved even more conclusively than the rotundity of the earth. There was a paralysis of doubt, indeed, that came to an end only when people began to have doubts about the Maginot Line. Perhaps, the mistake of the modern Doubting Thompsons was to doubt too much and yet not to doubt enough.

It seems to me to be a good thing to doubt nearly everything contemporary—not to doubt obstinately or beyond the possibility of conviction, but to have occasional holidays of scepticism about modern theories—of psychology, education and a score of other things. We easily become dogmatic about a new theory that is in the fashion as we become dogmatic about the virtues of an author who is in the vogue. It is one of the merits of Dr. Inge that he has been so austere and pugnacious a doubter in an age that abolished his own (imaginary) Golden Age. He has written many shocking things, but the human race is none the worse for being shocked. We easily grow complacent, and the most complacent people of all are often those who accuse others of complacency. Hence the need for a shocking doubter of genius now and then, like Mr. Shaw.

Perhaps it would serve a good purpose if a day of the year were set apart as a Day of Doubt, on which we could all force our doubts on each other and so test their soundness. I know a man who doubts the existence of vitamins. He could, I imagine, be convinced if, talking such nonsense on a Day of Doubt, he were confronted with a number of rats fed on unpolished rice and that sort of thing. Other people doubt the virtues of patent medicines—even of one's very latest patent medicine, the advertisement of which would bring conviction to a moron. There are few things more depressing than to meet these Doubting Thompsons who apparently would rather remain ill than swallow a few drops or a few tablets with their meals. Others, again, have doubts about doctors, osteopaths and naturopaths. I believe in the lot. I believe, indeed—at least, I could easily believe—in nearly any kind of "path" except a neuropath. Cures are one of the things in regard to which doubt is nearly always a mistake. One drop of doubt will destroy the effect of a whole medicine-bottle. One drop of faith, on the other hand, will fructify a bottle of coloured water.

On the whole, I suspect I belong to the party of the credulous; I am inclined to believe what I am told unless I am talking to a liar—and one usually finds out pretty soon whether one is talking to a liar or not. I read somewhere once of a modern man who had been swallowed by some sort of whale and come out alive, and I believed this as readily as I once believed the story of Jonah. I can understand the credulity of those Portuguese motorists who were recently persuaded that the juice of grapes was an effective substitute for petrol in the tank. Not many things are too strange to be true. Not even the fact that after due preparation it is possible for eight human fingers to lift a heavy man high into the air. It looks like a miracle, and it may be one; but, when he has seen it done, the old saying:

> He that complies against his will
> Is of his own opinion still

will hardly be true even of Doubting Thompson.

Y. Y.

BORODINO

(Translated from Lermontov.)

Come tell me, was it all for nought
That Moscow burned, although we fought
And would not yield?
Come Uncle, tell the tale again,
Of how we fought by might and main,
And men remember, not in vain,
Our Borodino's field.

Yes, in our time the men were men,
And from the heat of battle then
How few returned,
How few returned their fields to till!
Heroes—not chaps like you—they still
Fought on, but could not stay God's will
That Moscow burned.

We beat retreat by day and night,
We fumed and waited for the fight;
The old men jeered:
"We'd better winter in the bogs,
And build up huts and bring in logs,
But never turn and face the Frogs,
And singe their beard."

But then a noble stretch of ground
To build a great redoubt we found,
And there entrench.
All night we listened. Nought astir!
But when the dawn touched fir by fir
And lit the guns—why, then, good sir,
We saw the French.

I had my powder tightly rammed,
I'll serve you now and you be damned,
My fine Mounseer!
No hope for you to lurk and crawl;
We'll march against you like a wall;
And if needs must, we'll give our all
For Moscow, here.

For three whole days without a change,
We only shot at distant range;
No use at all!
You heard men saying left and right,
It's time to buckle to and fight,
Until across the fields the night
Began to fall.

I lay to sleep beside my gun,
But heard the cheer, till night was done,
The Frenchmen made.
Our men were quiet. One would sit
And mend his coat where it was slit,
Or bite his long moustache and spit
And clean his blade.

The very hour night was fled
Our guns began to move ahead:
My God, the rattle!
Our officers were gallant then;
They served their Tsar and loved their men.
They lie asleep in field or fen,
Who led the battle.

The Colonel set our hearts astir:
"Moscow's behind. My lads, for her,
As all have heard,
Our fathers fought with might and main.
Let's swear to die for her again."
And there on Borodino's plain
We kept our word.

That was a day. Towards our redoubt
We saw the Frenchmen gallop out
Through smoky air.
Dragoons as bright as on parade,
And blue Hussars with golden braid,
And Uhlans—what a show they made—
They all were there.

That was a day will never die:
The flags like spirits streaming by—
A fire ahead—
The clash of steel—the cannon's blast—
Our arms too weak to slay at last:
But few the bullets were that passed
Our wall of dead.

That day the foeman learnt aright
The way we Russian soldiers fight—
Learnt hand to hand.
Horses and men together laid,
And still the thundering cannonade.
Our breasts were trembling, as it made
Tremble the land.

Then darkness fell on hill and plain;
Yet we were game to fight again
When dawn was red.
Till all at once the drums began,
And as they rolled the Frenchmen ran;
And we must reckon, man by man,
Our friends, the dead.

Yes, in our time the men were men;
Soldiers—not like you chaps—were then
Heroic still.
Hard was the fate their courage earned;
Not many from that field returned,
And never had our Moscow burned—
But for God's will.

FRANCES CORNFORD

PLAYS AND PICTURES

"Skylark," at the Plaza

Hollywood's No. 1 situation returns in *Skylark*. They (Claudette Colbert and Ray Milland) have been married five years; they are in love, but business begins to rear its ugly head; their chef is sacrificed to keep in with an advertiser; they quarrel, divorce, fling about, patch it up with lies, break away, and remarry with no better prospect. We, the audience, go out where we came in, a little uncertain perhaps how far things are supposed to have been settled. The plot is thin to the point of emaciation; and everything in this cat-and-dog struggle depends on the ability of Claudette Colbert to hold the eye. She does, in fact, give a performance of irresistible charm; if the film has a moral, it is that marriage with Claudette Colbert is a career in itself. At moments the film is delicious: for example, the chase through the subway, when the endless argument of incompatibility is resumed in a crowded carriage, with passengers taking sides. Other situations are muffed. The interruptions at the classical concert would have been more outrageous if the music had been Mozart and not musical comedy, and the rough passage in the yacht did not seem quite so funny as it was supposed to be. However, the film flies along, and the actors (Brian Aherne, by the way, as would-be intervener) skate prettily to the end. This sort of thing has been done more wittily before, but without Miss Colbert.

The City Music Club: Pupils of Mme. Elena Gerhardt in "Cosi Fan Tutte."

Mme. Elena Gerhardt is—as advertisements say—a "guarantee of quality," and this performance was not only not disappointing, but triumphed over the absence of acting, scenery and orchestra (Dr. Berend "obliged" at the piano) in a way one would scarcely have thought possible. The *recitativo secco* was—sensibly—omitted, and the opera played through in well under two hours, the performers simply rising from their chairs in turn, as at a concert. The performance showed the indubitable greatness, as a teacher, of Mme. Gerhardt. The ensembles displayed a very high degree of finish, and there was hardly an example of ragged singing throughout. The stars we should select were Senta Linslow (Fiordiligi), Kate Peres (Despina) and Ernest Frank (Guglielmo). Miss Peres and Mr. Frank alone seem to possess volume enough to fill a larger theatre; the first has a highly developed technique, and the latter a remarkable "attack." Miss Linslow's *coloratura* was clear and agreeable to listen to. Act II contained the best singing: the sisters' duet, and the quartet which follows it, Guglielmo's aria, and Ferrando's answer to Fiordiligi, all being of outstanding merit.

Anthony Devas and English Landscapes at Agnew's

Mr. Devas remains a very uncertain painter. Some of his works are so poor that one cannot understand how he came to paint—much less to exhibit—them; and others show uncommon sensibility and accomplishment. Several of his new pictures show him at his happiest: *Resting*, *Bedtime*, *The Bedroom*, *Nicolette*. *Sunday Morning* is an admirably ambitious representation of a couple in bed: the man's head does not take quite its proper place, but much of the painting is excellent, and one is grateful to an artist for carrying his picture through instead of leaving the spectator's imagination to complete the work.

The small early nineteenth-century landscapes at the same gallery are remarkably choice. The little Constable is a gem, the David Roberts is one of the best we have seen, the Turner is at once sober and poetical, the David Coxes have a feeling of Wordsworth. *The Lake*, by W. Marlow, is delightful both intrinsically and as a period piece, the Holland is a beauty, and even the Stothard has charm, so long as one can forget that it is supposed to resemble a Watteau. Apart from the Constable, the best picture is an infinitely seductive Stubbs of a figure in a landscape. Nobody who cares for painting should miss this delightful little collection.

We recently remarked of a Modigliani at the Leicester Galleries that it was "so superficial as to excite suspicion." We have since seen strong evidence for its authenticity.

One Thousand Years of Lewes

The only nasty thing that could be said fairly of this, the second exhibition at "Miller's," in Lewes High Street, is that perhaps the title is rather big for the content. It is a charming little show in which any alert gallery-goer can while away an hour pleasantly and profitably. The eye is caught at once by a large silhouette of Cluny (of which foundation Lewes Priory was the eldest daughter) and four brilliantly coloured panels illustrating an early nineteenth century account (in verse) of the battle: all these from unknown hands, one at least of which betrays prodigious cunning. A few medieval relics, mostly from the Priory, give distinction to the show; there is a very fine head of the twelfth or thirteenth century in very bad condition, and some remarkable tiles of the same period or a little later. But, of course, it is in mementoes of the eighteenth and nineteenth century that the exhibition is richest. Mr. Dicker has lent a characteristic collection—characteristic of the artist-collector—of eighteenth century watercolours; all have to do with Lewes and a few have names, but the expert will here find scope for his science and ingenuity. A more imposing problem is set by the portrait, from the Worthing Gallery, of the first Lord Dorset. If this be an English picture—and it must be borne in mind that Dorset was constantly abroad on State business—it should be possible to discover the author. For it is a nice picture, and distinctly superior to what Englishmen were in the way of producing in that rather dingy period between Holbein and Van Dyck. Tom Paine is handsomely remembered; and the Lewes martyrs are presumably commemorated in several glorifications of the still glorious Bonfire Club. Baxter, the colour-printer, who enchanted our great-grandmothers, has not been forgotten, though it would have been no intolerable loss if he had.

Correspondence

INDIA AND DEMOCRACY

SIR,—While I am grateful for an appreciative review by Leonard Woolf of *India and Democracy*, will you give me space to express the view that he has said things which misrepresent not merely my own position, but the realities of the Indian problem? I am not concerned with justifying myself, but I am concerned with helping the British public to see truly the issues of the Indian problem.

Mr. Woolf refers to a suggested outline for a constitutional plan as my "solution." But I deliberately avoided putting forward any complete constitutional plan because that must essentially be made by Indians themselves. I did no more than suggest what appeared to me to be "the most hopeful line." I also expressed emphatically the belief (p. 385) that the *constitutional* problem cannot be completely or finally solved in advance; that the essential thing is for Indians to get down to the practical tasks of government; that the hope must be that, in the handling of those practical tasks, solutions for what look now like intractable problems will be found, and that, in co-operating on a programme aimed at the welfare of the people, communal differences may be forgotten. The essential thing, therefore, is to find a basis on which Indians can, with adequate freedom and responsibility, get started to work on these practical tasks; and I suggested that the function of the Crown as an impartial arbitral authority might be a valuable factor in this starting phase. Taking this view I thought it valuable to emphasise, as my main point, the vast opportunity for Indian national governments to work out plans for the education and material betterment of the masses of the people (as the necessary preliminary to any true democracy) an opportunity which in fact is widely open to them even under the constitution of the 1935 Act. If they could only concentrate on this opportunity the problem would in my view tend to solve itself.

There are two other vital matters on which Mr. Woolf seems to me to be leading your readers astray. I did go so far as to state one conclusion on the constitutional problem to which my own analysis seemed to lead, viz.: that "parliamentary democracy *such as that which has been developed and worked hitherto in England (essentially on a two-party basis)* is not likely to suit Indian needs." This attitude Mr. Woolf calls "democratic defeatism" and "throwing up the democratic sponge." This is a queer use and interpretation of words. Does Mr. Woolf think that the United States of America has "thrown up the democratic sponge"? I am a fervent believer in democracy and I want above all things to see a true democracy working in India; but our Westminster pattern is not the only pattern of democracy, and if, as I fear, it might in Indian conditions deteriorate into a very different type of rule, it is surely unfortunate to deter Indians from trying to shape other patterns. But the choice is theirs.

Lastly, a phrase has slipped in to Mr. Woolf's remarks which is commonly used, but which I believe to be dangerously wrong. He says "the Indian riddle" is "how we are to *give* these things"—self-government, etc.—to India and reconcile them with the exigencies of defence, etc. These are not things which we can "give." We can create an opportunity, we can help Indians to take it; but the essential task, if they are to have these things is *theirs*. Of course I know what Mr. Woolf meant, and I am sure that he deplores as much as I do the implication of that word "give" which Indians so much dislike. But the point which I am making is not a tiresome purism. It expresses the most fundamental truth in the whole Indian problem. George Schuster

House of Commons.

STRATEGY AND POLITICS

Sir,—Some remarks in your article, "Strategy and Politics," raise important questions of public policy. In that article you say that it would have been a good thing if we could have made a diversion in the West which would have drawn off 30 German divisions from the Eastern Front. We can all agree on that.

My complaint is that a paper of your standing should insinuate that this was possible. You definitely state that strategists whom you assert are not amateurs support your views. You imply that we should have made a descent on the peninsula of Cherbourg and Brest. You assert that had preparations been made in July, diversions which "might" have turned the scale in the East would have been possible. Although if the article is read carefully it will be seen that you have covered yourself up artfully with a smokescreen of "it is arguable" and "if" and "might," the general impression conveyed is that you know of sensible people who believe that we could have made a landing in the West which would have drawn off 30 German divisions from the East. Who are these people? How do they think it could have been done? Where would they have landed? How many divisions did your "experts" propose to put ashore to draw off 30 divisions from the East in *addition* to the German divisions which never left the West?

House of Commons. Stephen King-Hall

[This letter is discussed in our leading article. Here we need only point out that we did not imply that Cherbourg and Brest or any other particular areas in the West were possible bridgeheads—obviously we have not the means of knowing. We referred to them as examples in the course of a general argument that the best defence of the East is not necessarily in the East. As for the "experts" who agree with our main conclusion, does not Commander King-Hall himself know people in very responsible positions who hold that if Britain had decided to prepare an offensive in the West this summer it might have been done? He knows that we cannot mention names.—Ed. *N.S. & N.*].

HUMAN PLANNING

Sir,—Permit me to tread on the tail of the coat which Mr. Trystan Edwards draws before "experts of Garden City persuasion." I would first stress his large measure of agreement with us. Mr. Harrisson's useful observations as to the unpopularity of flat dwellings are no news to him or to anyone who has had much to do with housing. There can be no doubt at all that the vast majority of people, of all classes, want houses with private gardens and rooms on the ground floor giving access thereto. In a recent city-wide survey in Birmingham, the percentage of working-people expressing that preference was 92.4. Mr. Edwards, however, goes astray in several respects. A formula of 12 houses per acre is no part of the "Garden City" idea; nor is it prescribed by statute. It is a recommendation of the Tudor-Walters Report of 1918 and subsequent manuals of the Ministry of Health as a desirable standard in new development. In many housing schemes, including some at Welwyn, local densities exceed 12 per acre. But in my own experience, something quite important is always sacrificed at higher densities than that; the Tudor-Walters standards were very carefully considered, and are still sound as minimum space standards both within and around the dwelling.

To what extent we ought to cut down these standards still further in redevelopment in order to avoid flat-building is a matter of judgment. The evacuation of many industries and businesses from the large cities gives us the chance of a general opening-out of these cities which ought to be seized. Mr. Edward's 40 or more houses to the acre are obtained by resorting to narrow frontages, windows right on the public footpath, and too near those of the next row of houses (leading of course to the lace curtain, the aspidistra and general stuffiness), streets very like the old by-law streets, and "gardens" which are no more than gloomy yards. Probably he is right that most workers prefer rabbit-hutches to poultry-batteries—but once we are able to plan our towns, we shall not, I think, be forced to either of these detestable expedients.

F. J. Osborn

Sir,—I would suggest that the situation is both better and worse than Mr. Tom Harrison says. Some of the planners do appreciate that they have to deal with social and psychological problems as well as land and traffic problems. But when they apply for information to social psychologists they are offered more polemic than fact.

Mass observation has, of course, done much valuable work, and so have the Gallup Surveys; but the methods of both these organisations tend to lay more emphasis on words than on behaviour, on opinions than on movements. Though the people's views and tastes must be considered, their needs may have little connection with either.

I have been attempting for some time to make a survey of what is known in social psychology for teaching purposes, and am appalled by the barrelfuls of dialectical sack which drown every crumb of evidence. That evidence should not be impossible to obtain. For example, the American Gestalt psychologist Lewin has put forward the useful concept of social or mental space—a sort of private *lebensraum*. If we knew the facts they could be applied to such awkward practical problems as: How far are people willing to go to churches, clubs, pubs., polling booths, or community centres? Where does the desire for semi-detached privacy end and the fear of suburban loneliness begin? What is the effect on the social consciousness and conscience of living in communal buildings arranged on (*a*) the college staircase method, or (*b*) the corridor principle?

Strictly speaking, observation of other people's opinions and actions in these fields would probably be unreliable, but an adequate number of self-observations might mean something.

May I ask any of your readers to write to me who are interested in assisting an enquiry which is primarily academic, but may have practical consequences? Frederick Laws

60 St. John Street, Oxford.

THE PRESS AT NEWHAVEN

Sir,—I have read in your issue of Saturday, October 18th, an anonymous contribution entitled "The Press at Newhaven."

I am astonished that you should print this article, and so lend yourselves to a scurrilous and irresponsible attack on hard-working reporters by a civilian who does not give his name.

So far as the allegations against the *Daily Express* of faking and inaccuracy are concerned, I am satisfied that they are completely without foundation. Faking is regarded by all responsible newspapers as a cardinal sin, and if it is discovered in a reporter, that reporter is immediately dismissed.

The London reporters were subjected to much obstruction by the authorities in Newhaven, and worked under very difficult conditions. In view of this, and of the fact that only those carrying War Office passes were allowed near the ships, it is hard to see how your anonymous civilian could have been anywhere near the scene to make close observation.

Fleet Street, H. S. Gunn,
London. Managing Editor of
the *Daily Express*.

[The author of the article which has annoyed the Managing Editor of the *Daily Express* was an eye-witness of all he described. The proof that some of the reporting was inaccurate is supplied by the contradictions cited between descriptions of the same events in different papers.—Ed. *N.S. & N.*].

Sir,—As a journalist who was also present at Newhaven when the *Dinard* was alongside, I wish to corroborate a great deal of your civilian correspondent's criticism of the Press on that occasion.

Reporters are not a race apart, immune from a sense of decency, and I was not the only journalist there to deprecate the publication of the kind of thing illustrated by the self-damning quotations in civilian's letter.

No doubt any educated reader would writhe at some of the cheap, twisted, inaccurate sensationalism published, but to anyone who saw the mental, physical, and, in some cases dying wrecks, who provided the excuse for the effusions it was doubly nauseating.

At the same time, the authorities cannot be absolved from blame. The press passes were issued expressly for the disembarkation of the British wounded. There should have been no publicity given to the embarkation of the German prisoners, and certainly neither crowds—even of press men and women—to goggle at nor cameras to take close-ups of mutilated men. Neither press nor local press and liaison officers were wholly to blame, but the authorities, who in this as in larger issues had no clear-cut policy. Journalist

ARMS AND THE MAN

Sir,—The letter from A Soldier in Two Wars reads as though it had been based on a number of Army Council Instructions dealing with the selection of officer cadets. These instructions are, in themselves, admirable. Unfortunately, only some Commanding Officers carry them out, many, through lack of training in personnel selection, are quite unqualified to do so, and only rank bad discipline can explain the failure of the remainder. Furthermore, if your correspondent's picture is a true one, why does Army Form B.2617 (Application for transfer to an O.C.T.U.) require details of the school the applicant went to umpteen years ago? And why do the interview boards go so thoroughly into the same question? I have recently had interviews with the Command and the Technical Boards, and on each occasion I was made to feel that my residence at a couple of English universities doesn't quite make up for the fact that my old headmaster didn't attend the Headmasters' Conference.

The administrative machinery for the selection of officers is mainly at fault. Potential officers should not have to *apply* for commissions. Their selection should not depend on the whims and chance competence of C.O.s. Finally the waste of potential officers is merely a small fraction of the Army's colossal misemployment of its man power and needs to be related to the wider problem.

Gunner, R.A.

Sir,—The Home Guard also are unhappy. The officering in a district I know well may be sufficient reason for discontent.

The Battalion Commander is the local peer, age about 60, many years ago a subaltern in a crack cavalry regiment. Company Commander, heir to the local baronetcy, on the wrong side of 55, Eton, Oxford and Yeomanry. Platoon Commander an ex-regular sergeant, a musketry instructor in the Great War. Heavy build, poor health, and at a guess 55. Nothing against either of them except total lack of experience of or suitability for guerilla warfare. Yet there could hardly be less adequate officers for irregular guerilla troops, all agricultural labourers. Scoutmasters, gamekeepers, or even poachers would be better. Home Guard.

Sir,—What of the relationship between Junior Officers and those of higher rank? One of the most startling instances of effete leadership is that pursued by a Brigadier-General whose Command extends throughout South-East Scotland. One Highland Battalion of an Infantry Regiment has a tradition that, on guest nights, the Junior Officers give a display of Highland dancing (no doubt an excellent peace-time accomplishment). On a recent guest night, the standard attained in a " Foursome Reel " by the Junior Officers failed to please the Brigadier-General, who forthwith issued the *order* that one hour must be spent *three nights* weekly acquiring proficiency in Highland dancing.

Perhaps there is some obscure military reason that lends importance to this peculiar war-time routine, but unless the Junior Officers are let into the secret they will develop a spirit of great discontent. SCOTTISH NATIONALIST

PRODUCTION AND THE WAR

SIR,—I rather think " Socialist Non-Communist " is talking through his hat, or maybe has a grudge against someone.

No person in his right senses would vote for a shop steward who was not brilliant at his job, for a shop steward's work must be above criticism, so that no employer can suggest that, as he cannot do his own job, he cannot be a critic of the management or a leader of the men. While it is true they are only manual workers, they are elected among other things for being fair, outspoken critics and staunch trade unionists, interested in the brotherhood of mankind.

As regards the gift of the gab, shop stewards must necessarily be capable of seeing and expressing grievances in a convincing manner. They would make good managers or foremen on account of their practical experience both as organisers and craftsmen.

I would point out that a very limited number of workers can become chargehands, and that employers know it is far more profitable to keep a good man on the floor or bench than to cut production by promoting him.

On the whole, however, shop stewards are not seeking promotion. All they want is to co-operate for increased production by placing all their knowledge and ability and that of the men in the hands of the management.

After all, it may strike " Socialist Non-Communist " as peculiar that the great majority of Ministry of Labour organisers who distribute suitable labour to the various plants and factories are, or were, craftsmen, ex-shop stewards and ex-District Delegates, and now as Ministry of Labour officials are using their knowledge and experience under their brilliant leader in an executive capacity. They have, I think, successfully climbed a little higher than mere shop stewards. " BEVINITE "

POLLS AND SURVEY

SIR,—Reluctant as Gallup would be to disengage himself from the compliment, facts compel me to say on his behalf that he did not invent public opinion polls. *Literary Digest* was publishing the results of polls round about 1920, and the first *Fortune* Survey appeared before Gallup had completed his two years' experimental work.

The stress laid in " The Poll and the Survey " on the value of sampling for ascertaining social facts of all kinds is justified by the important results, of which many striking instances are cited. Not enough attention, we believe, is paid to the possibilities of sampling in establishing the facts of everyday life, although there is a growing consciousness on the part of business houses and government departments that they can learn much by these methods.

Polls and surveys will give correct results only when an accurate cross-section is used. Random contacts in the street will not give an accurate cross-section, and for this reason our interviewers make many door-to-door calls, and their attention is called especially to the need for contacting factory workers and similar people, who are not likely to be met casually in the street.

To regard an opinion poll as an intelligence test is not, it may be suggested, the most useful approach . . . Rather we would say that the result of a poll is one of the factors which a statesman should take into account when formulating a policy, and particularly when he is explaining that policy to the electors.

The stability of the opinions of the public on major issues has been demonstrated time after time by poll results, both here and in America. Within a wide latitude, differences in the wording of questions do not significantly affect the results. To regard the findings, therefore, as more or less accidental responses to leading questions is to underrate the significance which we believe may properly be attached to poll results. HENRY DURANT,
Director, The British Institute of
Public Opinion.

LATE DISCOVERY

SIR,—In epitomising my little book, *Express and Admirable*, your reviewer has the words " discovery (rather late ?) of Amanda Ros." May I be permitted to answer that query ? The Note in my book begins: " Amanda Ros is dead." I submit that if this is a belated discovery, then the *Times* publishes at least three such every day. There is the further innuendo that the discovery is *by* me, instead of *to* a public which almost certainly does not know Amanda. May I say that my first article on this writer appeared in the *Daily Chronicle* some ten years before THE NEW STATESMAN came into existence ?

My Note went on to explain who Amanda was, and to give reasons why readers of the *Daily Express* should make her acquaintance. I was—if I may say so—putting a regretted writer into touch with an enormous potential public. Now, Sir, supposing that I, who regard your distinguished paper with exactly the same degree of affection and amusement with which I have for long looked upon that " sister to cloudy confusion "—Amanda—suppose, Sir, that when presently you attain your 600th number, I permit myself a congratulatory note in the *Daily Express*. Will you then twit me with late discovery ? Or will you drop me a pleasant little line, thanking me for putting you into touch with an immense potential public which, but for my Note, must have continued in lamentable ignorance of your existence ? JAMES AGATE

10 Fairfax Road, N.W.6.

[Our reviewer writes : Mr. Agate wrote of Amanda Ros as though no one except Mr. Agate had ever heard of her. Why ? He gives two answers. One is that he has the ear of an " enormous potential public," and must write to its standards. But is the public of *Express and Admirable* any larger than, say, the public of Mr. Aldous Huxley, who some years ago included an essay on Amanda Ros in one of his books ? After all, I was reviewing *Express and Admirable*, and not the *Daily Express*. Mr. Agate's second point is the claim that, in fact, he discovered Amanda Ros years and years ago, and was writing about her in the *Daily Chronicle* in 1903. This would certainly give him precedence in discovery over other critics. The 600th number of THE NEW STATESMAN appeared, by the way, in 1924, so that a congratulatory note from Mr. Agate would indeed seem a little late.—ED., " *N.S. & N.*"]

JUSTICE FOR BABIES

POINTS FROM LETTERS

Expectant Father and Expectant Mother will perhaps be interested to learn that a letter dealing with the plight of the new baby in the matter of napkins was sent to the Board of Trade by the Women Public Health Officers' Association on October 1st last. The remedy suggested is that the certificate which entitles the expectant mother to 50 coupons should also entitle her to buy *without coupons* enough Turkish towelling to make four dozen napkins. AMY SAYLE,
Hon. Secretary.

There are some things a baby has to have before it is a day old, and a minimum of three dozen napkins is one of them ; for preference, four dozen, unless the mother is prepared to spend every spare minute of every day washing napkins.

The point I have been expecting an indignant Board of Trade official to make is that it is quite unnecessary to surrender *any* coupons for napkins. If they are made of muslin they are coupon free. In addition, they wash more easily, they dry more quickly, they are more comfortable for the child—and, although expensive to buy ready-made, they are simple and cheap to make at home.
CHRISTINA ROTHBARTH

MISPRINTS

SIR,—If " Critic's " " anthology of glorious misprints " is ever published, it certainly ought to include one I have just come across in Dent's *Everyman's Encyclopaedia*. Under " Calypso " we read . . . " When Odysseus was wrecked on her isle she treated him hospitably, and promised him *immorality* if he would marry her." (Italics mine, of course). And there is good reason to think that the lady meant it. BERTRAM R. CARTER

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[9s 6d net]

JONATHAN CAPE

BOOKS IN GENERAL

WHILE Byron and Hobhouse were at Malta refusing to leave the ship until the Governor ordered the guns of the harbour to salute their arrival, there was another writer in the background getting a good deal of quiet pleasure out of the fact that the Governor had evidently decided not to play. This shadowy third was John Galt, hitherto only a dull Scottish poet and young business-man, but later to become one of the most delightful humorous novelists of the Scottish hearth. Of his work, *The Annals of the Parish* can still be read with enormous pleasure, even by those who, like myself, never take kindly to the Scottish dialect and whose taste for glens, kirks, lochs and kailyards has suffered from an early excess of Scott, George Macdonald and Stevenson. With less pleasure one can also read Galt's *Ayrshire Legatees* and skip through his long novel *The Entail*. There is some well-tipped satire in both these books. Byron said that the Leddy Grippy of *The Entail* was the finest portrait of a woman in English literature since Shakespeare, but he was thinking, I am afraid, not of literature but of the woman who had annoyed him.

Of the three men who waited on board at Malta and who met several times later during Byron's Mediterranean travels, Galt was easily the most versatile, one almost had said the most original. At that time he was travelling with a scheme for capturing the Turkish trade and with an eye for any deal that came by the way. (He just missed buying the Elgin marbles as a speculation and was actually their nominal owner for a week or two while they were on the sea.) Galt showed the same sort of efficiency and enterprise in business which Peacock had, a capacity for large and problematical undertakings; and when one looks at the long list of plays, poems, hack biographies, pamphlets and novels which he wrote, it is a surprise to discover that the main business of his life was buying and selling, pushing plans for colonisation, or for damming great rivers like the Clyde and the St. Lawrence, getting canal bills through Parliament and founding towns in Canada. The now thriving town of Guelph, in Ontario, was founded by him; he chose its site and planned its institutions; and one other in the same province bears his name.

Versatility, especially if it includes practical gifts, is a great danger to writers. To Galt, literature was always a side-line, a means of making a little extra, which he needed very badly. His work suffers accordingly. But there is always something sympathetic about the business-man novelist, the man who gets a little quiet amusement out of the Byrons, and himself never quite surrenders to the aberrations of the profession. Into the posing, frantic life of Grub Street, with its suggestion of the intellectual nudist colony, a man like Galt brings the mystery, indeed, it amounts to the richness and romance of the conventional; he has, by comparison, the transcendent poise of one who does not earn his living by exposing his shame. *Tout se paie*, of course, and Galt knew that he was a part-timer if not an amateur by temperament. But those writers whose main occupation keeps them on the outside of literary circles, preserve a kind of innocence, a modest but all the more determined sense of their merits, and are less tempted to imitate and follow a school. Galt had such an individuality. He was brilliantly inventive by nature. He made a virtue of his inability to concoct plots and fables, by writing documentary works, which in his *Autobiography* he calls "theoretical histories." And it is interesting to know that *The Annals of the Parish* was written long before *Waverley*—and was for twenty years without a publisher until Scott's work started the interest in Scottish subjects. Galt was indeed an innovator, and innovators do not generally reap fully where they have sown. Not many writers can say that they have founded a town, invented a new kind of book, and have given an important new word to the language: the word Utilitarian was taken by John Stuart Mill from the lips of the Rev. Mr. Balwhidder of *The Annals of the Parish*.

Galt's inspiration for this book came from *The Vicar of Wakefield*. He set out to create a Scottish Dr. Primrose. In fact, the Rev. Mr. Balwhidder, timid, pious, cautious, decorous, yet possessed of a broad tolerance of nature, is very different. One is never quite certain whether the minister knows how comical he really is. And when I say that *The Annals* is an amusing book I am not addressing myself to the literary critic who can take his amusement spread very, very thin as long as the literariness is there. *The Annals* are brisk and diverting, and as succulent, within the bounds of clerical decorum, as local scandal itself. We see the life of the parish of Dailmailing year after year, growing, waning, growing again.

Smuggling seizes Dailmailing's fancy for a time, and along come the illegitimate babies; soldiering seizes it; revolutionary ideas get into its heads; the old laird gives place to a new order; a mill absorbs the free weavers. And on top of these main episodes there is the froth of gossip. Old ladies fly into tantrums, young girls elope, justices roar, and wicked old women conceal smuggled tea in their mattresses and go to bed on them, feigning illness when the Excise officer and his informer come round. If one is in any doubt about the character of this book the first page settles it at once. The Minister of Dailmailing, whose prudence drove him to marry three wives in the course of his lifetime, belongs to the best dry vintage of Scottish humour, with its strange conflicting tangs of primness and animal spirits. He was put in by a patron over the heads of the angry villagers, and over their heads he had to go the Sunday he was "placed" at the church. Pelted with mud and guarded by soldiers, he had to climb in at a window because the church door was locked, only to be greeted inside by one of the zealots with the appropriate Scripture about those who enter "not by the door of the sheepfold but by some other way." And as the dismayed but long suffering Mr. Balwhidder kneeled at the induction ceremony a loud laugh went up from the congregation when the neighbouring minister gave him a tap on the head with a staff, and said, "Timber to timber." Having come in at the window, the minister was obliged to leave by it as well.

The inhabitants of Dailmailing had, as can be seen, a marked spirit and a turn for fantasy, but the quiet Minister was soon their equal. A gamekeeper had seduced the Rev. Mr. Balwhidder's parlourmaid, and the Minister obliged them both to stand in church This happened after the death of the first Mrs. Balwhidder and was a warning to the prudent minister that he had better get a second wife. Very different she was from the first, a managing woman with an "overearnestness to gather gear." She turned the meditative manse into a raucous farm, and worked day and night in the dairy, so that the Minister was left in his study most evenings as lonely as a bachelor. He might have married a factory. But he outlived her, too, and the third one, married in his old age, was nearer his own nature. She was a professor's widow, and the Minister's courtship of her is one of the most remarkable I ever remember in English comic literature. It is like something from Sterne, without the leer. One catches in this scene the salty sparkle of Galt's comedy at its best:

> On the Thursday the company was invited, came, and nothing extraordinary was seen; but in cutting up and helping a hen, Dr. Dinwiddie put one wing on Mrs. Nugent's plate, and the other wing on my plate, and said there have been greater miracles than these two wings flying together, which was a sharp joke, that caused no little merriment at the expense of Mrs. Nugent and me. I, however, to show that I was none daunted, laid a leg also on her plate, and took another on my own, saying, in the words of the reverend doctor, there have been greater miracles than that these two legs should lie in the same nest, which was thought a very clever come off; and at the same time I gave Mrs. Nugent a kindly nip in her sonsy arm, which was breaking the ice in as pleasant a way as could be.

The American war drains the Minister's parish, and then the French revolution divides the village into Government men and Jacobins and the new cults of philosophy, philanthrophy and utility grow among the weavers. One angry Tory J.P., on being asked by an arrested weaver whether Christ was not a reformer, replied in a rage: "And what the devil did He make of it. Was he not crucified?" Which, I should say, is a very accurate report of what Christians who are sitting pretty really think of Christ, without realising it.

The Annals are, besides their comedy, a fascinating social history; and Galt succeeds, where so many artists fail, in showing how his place, his people and their interests grow and change. At the end the Rev. Mr. Balwhidder is far from being the pious clown he was at the beginning. But the zest of the narrative springs from its use of every-day speech. Here the dialect words are used sparsely but with vivid effect. Words like "yellyhoo" and "outstrapulous," full of sound and picture, are the hi-jinks of a vastly living vernacular. When we turn to the homely farce of *The Ayrshire Legatees* or the more complicated satire of Glasgow manners in *The Entail*, it is by these phrases and especially by the realism of Galt's dialogue, that the eye is taken. A natural, stoical charm, a racy, nutty equanimity, unperturbed and unembittered by the shocks of the world, is in all Galt's books; and in his life too, which was filled with the disappointments which fall to a man who is more inventive than his fellows, as the reader of his *Autobiography* may see. The disappointments of affairs may indeed prepare a writer to take the dramas of the imagination less extremely and certainly rid him of the artist's temptation to pose. Galt, the part-timer, who reverenced the poet in Byron and wrote his life, was not in the least over-awed by him nor deceived. So easily might Galt have sneered or, worse still, have become the prosaic toady; it is the mark of Galt's independence and talent that he kept his moderate Tory head. And in those times it was something to have a level head. When Godwin's works were banned for their Jacobinism in the Ayrshire library, Galt, who detested Godwin's opinions, fought to get the ban removed, and was successful.

V. S. PRITCHETT

TRUE BLUE

Memories of Victorian Oxford. By Sir CHARLES OMAN. *Methuen.* 15*s*.

This book can be enjoyed alike as a self-portrait and as a costume-piece. Sir Charles Oman, who is 81, will endear himself to the urbane reader by his picturesque disapproval of most things that have happened since 1860. For years he was a leader of the Non Placet Society, founded to oppose distressing innovations at Oxford such as the Modern Languages Schools and "sweet girl-graduates in their golden hair." When asked as an undergraduate by his tutor whether he was interested in philosophy,

> I told him in reply that while I had a certain interest in the history of the development of human thought, I was essentially a prejudiced person, who hated the idea of pulling up the foundations of ethics by psychological enquiry, or analysing my religious instincts. In short, I was approaching philosophy from the point of view of a Conservative and a Churchman, and did not want my conscience explained away.

This candour is characteristic and disarming. To confess intellectual timidity requires moral courage. But such reluctance to face unwelcome evidence is perhaps a handicap to an historian. Nor is it a help to a statesman, and Sir Charles used to be prominent among those champions of Mussolini who talked about the punctuality of Fascist railway trains.

At Winchester the young Oman was the victim of what he roundly calls the prefects' sadism—which is particularly interesting because misery at school usually excites the critical faculty and prepares men to be reformers. But, from the day he went to Oxford, Sir Charles's career seems to have been uniformly prosperous. He has been a Fellow of All Souls' for fifty-eight years, he represented the University in the Commons for sixteen. He has, it is true, devoted much of his energy to fighting losing battles, but he has done this with zest and courage; and though in these memoirs he is often caustic, he is never embittered. His most personal grievance is that his lectures are ill-attended, because tutors discourage their pupils from attending the lectures of professors. I expect that Sir Charles is a better lecturer than most, and occasionally a lecturer can infect an audience with his own enthusiasm, but as a method of conveying information is not the lecture-system an otiose survival from the age before the invention of printing?

Sir Charles is contemptuous of some of the great Oxford Victorians about whom we should most like to know—Mark Pattison is dismissed as a self-centred troglodyte, Jowett as a self-advertising snob, Pater as a precious *poseur*. *Poseur*, indeed, is his favourite term of abuse, and he applies it alike to Julius Caesar and Charles James Fox. A hearty man, he is puzzled and disgusted by characters more complicated than his own. An honest man, he loyally accepts facts unpleasant to him, when he cannot run away from them; and ten days spent in the company of his *bête noire*, Mr. Gladstone, left him with "a most unexpected feeling of respect." (This interesting episode is recounted more fully in his previous volume, *Things I Have Seen*.) His memoirs, it will be seen, are a help to the understanding of the Tory temperament.

They are also full of interesting *minutiæ* about a vanished past. When the young Oman first went to All Souls', there still survived Fellows elected merely because they were Founder's Kin, including a fox-hunting squire whose most intellectual interest was to play whist—at which he continually revoked. We are given a lively description of Professor Robinson Ellis with his extraordinary clothes and sudden devastating remarks. To a colleague recently married to an attractive girl, "I wonder," said the Professor, "how long it will take you to get as tired of your wife as I am of my sisters." This, Sir Charles points out, was not intended in the least as an insult, but as a reasoned observation on the female sex. Then there is Professor York Powell, who never produced a book or gave any serious course of lectures, neglected all appointments and talked to his pupils about little except boxing and racing. There are charming accounts of the Bursar's Dinners in the old days at All Souls', when the College dividends were declared, from which non-residents might get as much as £800 a year: after the announcement all the Fellows were called upon to sing a song, and the two most recently elected Fellows competed in a steeplechase round hall over the High Table chairs. Early Victorian clergymen, one learns, usually preached in lavender kid gloves. Is it still customary, one wonders, for an All Souls' Fellow to visit Tonbridge School, as Sir Charles has done, and deliver a Latin oration sitting in a four-horse chariot with the Master of the Skinners' Company at his side? And here is a piece of information Sir Charles received from Dr. Sewell, who became Warden of New College in 1860, and ruled for forty-three years. When well over seventy he was recommended to wear spectacles, and asked if any sort of spectacles would do, as he had a pair by him.

> When railways were first introduced, there was a common belief that they would be so deadly for the eyes that three or four long journeys at the rate of thirty or forty miles an hour would irretrievably ruin the sight. On the suggestion of my father and aunts, I bought a pair of spectacles to shield myself from this danger. But as I found, from the testimony of others and from my own experience, that railway travelling did not have this deleterious effect, I put the glasses away with care. And here I have them still.

To those who share my enjoyment of such antiquarian details Sir Charles's memoirs can be confidently recommended. There are many pleasing anecdotes relating to his various interests—he has been a ghost-hunter, a numismatist, a proctor, a pageant-master and an official in the Foreign Office. If a young Tory is proverbially a knave, an aged Tory can be an imposing monument whose asperities are so characteristic that we welcome them. There is, however, one point on which I feel bound to protest against Sir Charles's prejudice. He insists that it is better to travel with one companion than with two. A considerable experience of both methods has convinced me of the contrary.

RAYMOND MORTIMER

DETECTION

The Black Paw. By CONYTH LITTLE. *Collins.* 7s. 6d.
A Capital Crime. By LESLIE FORD. *Collins.* 7s. 6d.
Speak No Evil. By M. G. EBERHART. *Collins.* 7s. 6d.
The Deadly Sunshade. By PHOEBE ATWOOD TAYLOR. *Collins.* 7s. 6d.
Death in Botanist's Bay. By ELIZABETH FERRARS. *Hodder & Stoughton.* 8s. 3d.
Maigret and M. Labbé. By GEORGES SIMENON. *Routledge.* 8s.
The Case of the Constant Suicides. By JOHN DICKSON CARR. *Hamish Hamilton.* 7s 6d.
The Case of the Abominable Snowman. By NICHOLAS BLAKE. *Collins.* 7s. 6d.
Death in the Sun. By CHARLES SAXBY. *Robert Hale.* 8s.
She'll Be Dead By Morning. By DANA CHAMBERS. *Robert Hale.* 7s. 6d.

These ten selected books do not constitute a feast of detection exactly, but the makings of a good square meal. I would not rate any of them higher than a cut off the joint with two veg., but the meat is fresh and often tender, the vegs. are occasionally exotic, and only one of the authors deigns to confuse our palate with Fifth Column Sauce. The ladies must take pride of place, not that their cooking is superior (their meat is often overdone or underdone), but for the elegance of their dishing-up. Miss Little, in particular, has a neat hand with the parsley, and her piquant style makes her an excellent *apéritif* to the rest.

The Black Paw is an animal's paw, which obtrudes itself on the dust-cover and occasionally elsewhere in the book, but it serves little purpose, except to show that there is an animal at large in a house where animals are forbidden. Naturally its furry appearances give an added fright to the heroine, who has gone to the house in the role of a housemaid to steal a few compromising letters for a friend, and finds herself in the thick of a couple of murders, not to mention the housework. The butler walks in his sleep, the owner of the house is drunk as often as not, a rocking-chair rocks by itself in the dark, and the heroine can't find the letters, but only bibles and revolvers. Miss Little writes with tremendous dash and spirit, and is far too busy entertaining us with her characters to worry over the coherence of their actions. It is best not to investigate too closely into that, but to take the book for what it is meant to be, a detective farce.

Where love is concerned, Miss Little has a heart for flirtation, while artfully dodging the sticky morass of sentimentality. Miss Ford, on the contrary, wades boldly in. *A Capital Crime*, finds space for all the authoress's feelings for grand old ladies, clean young men and sweet girls, not to mention cads, bounders and designing females. It is a pity, as the plot is well conceived and might easily mystify us if we had only a few more suspects to distract our attention. But with the chief cad dead, the bounder or the designing female must cough up the criminal. The justification of the story is the setting in Yellowstone National Park, where a party of sight-seeing tourists foregather to watch geysers spouting and play with bears—only one of the party has come with a more sinister intention. Miss Ford's power of observation and description is at its best in conveying the fascination of the Park to us, who are never likely to visit it.

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David Pilgrim is the pseudonym of John Palmer, an authority on Molière, and Hilary Saunders, author of *The Battle of Britain* and *Bomber Command*. 9s.
MACMILLAN

compromising circumstances and unjust accusations her heroines lose what little common sense they had to start with and go frantic with hysteria, ending up as often as not in a muddy scramble in evening dress in a fog, with things brushing their faces. *Speak No Evil* conforms to this pattern exactly.

When a bullet sings past Asey Mayo's ear in the very first chapter, the situation on Cape Cod must be getting out of hand. The Women's League to Defend Democracy is on a war footing. Perhaps that accounts for it. Or is the firing linked up with the mottled body of a handsome widow, who has just swigged off a cocktail of poison farther up the beach? Miss Atwood Taylor makes *The Deadly Sunshade* hum with bullets and wise-cracks, and turns out as exciting an episode in the Asey Mayo saga as she has yet conceived. But Cape Cod! What a motive! Uh-uh!

Botanist's Bay is the herbarium of some place like Brighton, where the Curator was found shot early one morning. *Death in Botanist's Bay* uses a simple enough plot with a wealth of characters and a spate of dialogue to cover the thin places. Miss Ferrars' fluent style is very readable, but never taxes our intelligence.

The latest Simenon volume contains one genuine Maigret case and one unclassifiable study of a criminal type. The Maigret is not one of the best, for the famous Inspector never gets to grips with the characters in *Death of a Harbour-Master* sufficiently to apply his photographic technique—that saturation of himself in the hypo. of human nature by which the outline of criminal motive is developed. It is hard to remember, when the story is finished, what the reason for the crime was. An old Norman harbour-master is found wandering in Paris without a memory and with a nasty wound in his skull. As soon as he is taken home he is poisoned. The stage is set for one of Simenon's vivid pictures of life in a small French port, but we must make do with the painted back-drop, for the characters never step up to the footlights. The other story in *Maigret and M. Labbé* is placed in a small mountain village in Alsace, where a quiet enigmatical visitor turns out to be a master-crook. The double moral (as it appears to be a moral tale) is that crooks can never revert to honesty, and, if you must be a crook, it is best to be a master-crook.

Mr. Dickson Carr has borrowed a murder method from Dr. Thorndyke in *The Case of the Constant Suicides*. An elderly Scottish gentleman insures his life for £35,000 with a suicide clause, then locks himself in a room at the top of a tower 58¼ feet high, and throws himself out of the window. Then another elderly Scottish gentleman locks himself in the room and throws himself out of the window. Finally a third elderly Scottish gentleman is found hung in another locked room. A clear case for Dr. Fell. The Thorndyke method is given an ingenious twist by Mr. Dickson Carr, but why must the very notion of Scotch whisky send him into peals of laughter?

The Case of the Abominable Snowman is written with great competence, some wit and a faint tone of condescension—a combination we have learnt to expect from the author. The plot has its good moments. A sedate cat drinks a saucer of milk and goes haywire; a fascinating woman is found provocatively hung; and a snowman proves to be a snowman in more ways than one. The motive is decidedly original although I doubt whether it will bear the load put on it. But the pace is disappointing. The writing is high-powered, but in low gear, and there are long flat stretches of Nigel Strangeways emphasising his charms to try the reader's patience.

The last two books need not detain us. *Death in the Sun* is included for its exotic setting—a sort of Dartington Hall Community rehearsing plays in the Arizona desert. Confusion, excitement and fancy dress prevail. *She'll be Dead by Morning* is chosen to represent the tough, slick Americans. The pace is not perhaps as hot as the title indicates, but the finale produces the right bang—a pretty running shot in the kidneys.

RALPH PARTRIDGE

POLAND AND LIBERTY

The Cambridge History of Poland, 1697 to 1935. Edited by W. F. REDDAWAY, J. H. PENSON, O. HALECKI, R. DYBOSKI. *Cambridge University Press.* 30*s.*

From Serfdom to Self-Government: Memoirs of a Polish Village Mayor, 1842–1927. Translated by W. J. Rose. *Minerva Publishing Co.* 8*s.* 6*d.*

With Poles the inhabitants of these islands are now very familiar, but it is doubtful whether they know much more about Poland than they did two years ago. *The Cambridge History of Poland*, 1697–1935, is, I believe, the longest and most detailed account of the country's affairs that has yet appeared in English. Its production at this moment is a considerable achievement. Two of the Polish contributors have died, victims of the New Order in Poland. Others are in concentration camps. One of the English contributors was killed by a bomb in London. A volume had been planned to precede the present one, describing the rise of the Polish State, the Union with Lithuania, the glories of the sixteenth-century commonwealth, and finally Poland's decline during the seventeenth century. That cannot at present be produced, since few of the chapters had reached this country when the war broke out.

Thus this Cambridge History, which should have presented Polish History as a whole, is forced to introduce the English reader to Poland at the most unfavourable moment for comprehension—to that Poland of flagging vitality and political sterility about which we all read at school as the object of endless eighteenth-century diplomatic intrigues. This misfortune is increased by a failure in the planning of the book. Far too little space is given to the description of general conditions in Poland at any given date.

Thus there is no explanation how this vast flaccid political body came into existence, no indication of the latent sources of vitality when the story starts, no account of the various elements in Poland's make up. The book opens with two chapters—in themselves excellent—on the depressing political history of Poland under the two Saxon Kings. These are followed by a chapter defining rather than explaining the old Polish constitution. It is only in the fourth chapter by Professor Rose on social conditions before the partition that the reader can begin to feel acquainted with the Polish nation. It is unlikely, however, that he will feel Poland's history is really worth writing and reading until he reaches the neighbourhood of page 90, and is fairly embarked on the story of the Polish national revival in the second half of the eighteenth century and of the partitions, well told by Professor Dembinski, General Kukiel and Mr. Reddaway. General Kukiel's two chapters on Kosciuszko and the share of the Poles in the French wars are not less moving for their admirable precision of statement.

I suspect, however, that in proportion as the reader is interested by these chapters and by others almost as good that follow he will be increasingly discontented because of what the Cambridge History of Poland does not tell him.

Poland has always been a predominantly agricultural country. From start to finish there is no clear account of the country's agrarian problems. Eighteenth-century Poland was a vast commonwealth of Squire Westerns, who, unlike the English Squire Western, were not in the orbit of a great commercial capital and an energetic central power. In any agricultural community the market town is the most important social cell. The Cambridge History does not impress the reader with the overwhelmingly important fact that the Polish market town throughout the period under review was more Yiddish than Polish in speech, more Judaic than Catholic in religion, a fact equally unfortunate for both Poles and Jews. The Jewish community in Poland—almost as numerous as the enfranchised class and for most of the period under review the largest Jewish community in the world—deserves a great deal more space than it has received. Far too little information is given about the status of the peasants, although the greatest threat to Polish national survival was undoubtedly the persistent attempt of the partitioning powers to prevent any solidarity between the peasants and the educated classes.

The enfranchised class in the old Polish State was about 10 per cent. of the entire population, it included magnates, squires and yeomen. Although overwhelmingly Polish in speech by 1700, it included Lithuanian, White Ruthene, Ukrainian, German,

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LONGMANS

Armenian, Tartar, and even Jewish elements. The Polish-Lithuanian State endured for four centuries as a political institution and remained for another century and a half an important political and social fact, because medieval Poland had offered to the gentry in a vast area east of ethnic Poland a more attractive status than did any of their other neighbours. The attraction of political liberties had solved the nationalities problem for the enfranchised class, but for reasons connected with the lack of a strong centre of political life and of satisfactory local nuclei the old Polish institutions failed to expand so as to benefit other classes. The towns and the peasants lost rights instead of gaining them. The problem of the unenfranchised non-Polish elements was bound to be used by Poland's enemies as soon as the peasantry were awakened from their slumber. Thus what had been one of the most tolerant and promising States in the middle of the sixteenth century had become one of the most intolerant, and was apparently moribund by 1717, when Poland in fact lost her independence by accepting the Tsar's interference in her constitutional affairs.

The next 200 years were spent by Poles in attempting to regain control of their own fate, a control that they very well knew their ancestors had lost by misusing their own liberties. It is a story of some interest to us to-day when democracy is in dire straits owing to a complacent isolationism not altogether unlike that of the Polish eighteenth-century squires.

The Polish national anthem, "Poland has not yet died, for we live on," was the marching song of the Polish Legion which fought for the First French Republic in Italy, immediately after Poland's name had been wiped off the map. The sentiment is peculiarly Polish. The old Polish commonwealth had existed for the freedom of a class. Throughout the period of thraldom all the best Poles were haunted by a personal sense of disgrace from the failure of their ancestors to maintain a freedom and dignity that were both personal and national. It was no mere chance that the only great Polish writer familiar to the English was fascinated by the analogous problem of Lord Jim, and that English Marlowe was struck by Lord Jim's preoccupation with his disgrace rather than his fault. The state of mind Conrad was portraying was his father's and his own youthful agony about the failure of the rising of 1863. Pilsudski has graphically described his own feelings on the subject and those of the exiled insurrectionaries he met in Siberia.

This intense personal preoccupation with the Polish problem has meant that few Poles, except those who to some extent cut themselves off from the national community, have contributed largely to the general problems. But this is scarcely a valid ground for criticism, for the first duty of the Polish educated classes is to enable the nation as a whole to lead a normal life. The fever of torment in which they lived throughout the nineteenth century was the more acute because the problem of choice before Poles has nearly always been a very difficult one. To take two examples. Was Marshal Poniatowski right to remain loyal to Napoleon to the end? What was the right line of conduct for a Pole in 1914? English criticisms of Polish policy would be more willingly received if they were less astoundingly glib.

While the Polish educated classes were striving to maintain under foreign domination a sense of human dignity, which we should prize to-day as the exact opposite of the totalitarian attitude, a Polish nation of all classes, such as Kosciuszko had dreamed of, was coming into being. *From Serfdom to Self-government*, admirably translated by Professor Rose, is the autobiography of a peasant of S. Poland named Jan Slomka, who was born in 1842 and was decorated by the President of the Republic with 400 other peasants in 1927. It is the last incident he records. He has the most unusual faculty of remembering accurately the changes in small details of daily life and those he records are nearly all marks of progress. He leaves the reader in no doubt that there was more poverty, dirt, lice, drunkenness, ignorance and inertia when he was a boy than when he was an old man. He describes dramatically his own purchase of a clock when newly married—no one else in the village had ever possessed such a thing. Still more momentous was the decision to plant some potatoes where they had never been planted before, in the teeth of village mockery and his own inward doubts. When Slomka was a boy the peasants thought that the national cause was an affair of the gentry; by 1914 Polish independence was their own cause. This book in its cheerful prosaic detail is an admirable corrective to the romantic strain in which Polish affairs are so often dealt with. It is plain, sensible and optimistic. It provides salutary evidence that a collectivised farm is not the only form of progress.

FRANCIS GENN

BOMBER COMMAND

Bomber Command. *H.M. Stationery Office. 1s. 6d.*

Within a week after publication *Bomber Command* became a best-seller. It has been serialised in various newspapers, and everywhere one sees the black and mauve illustrated cover of the best official pamphlet the war has yet produced. There could be no pretence this time (as there was with the same Ministry's *Battle of Britain*) of surprise that people should be eager to read about the R.A.F. After Russia and supplies to Russia, the exploits of Bomber Command come first in the news. Day after day the details of our one offensive against the enemy make an impressive if rather monotonous showing. It is to fill out that story of towns and objectives methodically bombed, to reassure ourselves with the knowledge of something done, that so many people have hurried to buy copies of *Bomber Command*. The documentary side is very well done indeed. All the phases of bombing in the air war, from early sallies against the German fleet to the present concerted attack on German supplies and industry, are dealt with in a way that brings vividly into the foreground the men taking part in these operations. A few sentences from a pilot's report can give us the "feel" of a situation, and not only pilots, but the rest of the bomber crew—the rear-gunner, for example—are allowed from time to time to speak for themselves: "The striking thing about a tail turret is the sense of detachment it gives you. You're out beyond the tail of the plane and you can see nothing at all of the aircraft unless you turn sideways. It has all the effects of being suspended in space. It sounds, perhaps, a little terrifying, but actually it is fascinating." Even more vivid than the descriptions are the numerous accompanying photographs, many of them taken in action. Perhaps the most remarkable of a remarkable collection are the photographs on page 109 showing the effects of bombing on the Ems-Dortmund Canal, and the photograph taken during the sub-stratosphere raid on Brest last July, in which the fields below look like crazy paving. In conveying the routine and excitement of a great variety of bombing operations, this pamphlet, with its 128 pages of text and photographs, is completely successful. It is less informative about the general policy of Bomber Command. How far that policy, worked out in collaboration with the Ministry of Economic warfare, has been successful, and can be said to be successful *now*, when its results are most urgently needed, *Bomber Command* does not enlighten us. There is a great deal to be said, as Mr. David Garnett has recently argued, for giving the public more vital information about all the Services. We lost the battles for Greece and Crete, but why has not the War Office published realistic and considered accounts of those campaigns? The Air Ministry, of course, has a better story to tell. In *Bomber Command* it tells its story very well, and for that we must be grateful.

Week-end Competitions

No. 612

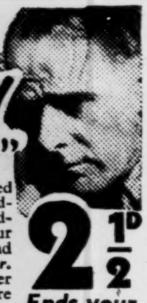
Set by William Whitebait

We offer the usual prizes for new light on famous characters and scenes in fiction. A description by Mr. Collins of his visit to the Bennet family, Mr. Stiggins on the subject of Weller *pére et fils*, a fragment from the unpublished diary of Malvolio or M. de Charlus: this is the sort of line competitors are asked to take, and they may choose their own subjects. Limit 250 words.

RULES—

1. Envelopes should be marked with the number of the Problem, in the top left-hand corner, and should be addressed to COMPETITIONS, 10 Great Turnstile, W.C.1. Solutions must reach the Editor by first post on Monday, November 3rd.

2. The Editor's decision is final. He reserves the right to print in part or as a whole any matter



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Contents of October Number

1. Anglo-Soviet Unity, by J. B. Priestley
2. Greetings to the Soviet Theatre from John Gielgud
3. Joseph Stalin, by Beatrice King
4. Attitude towards Work and Workers, by Z. K. Coates
5. Town Planning, by Arthur Ling
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RESULT OF COMPETITION No. 609

Set by Saint-Loup

The usual prizes are offered for a set of three. Ruthless Rhymes, on the model of those by Harry Graham, e.g.,

Philip, foozling with his cleek,
Drove his ball through Helen's cheek,
Sad they bare her corpse away,
Seven up and six to play.

Report by Saint-Loup

One reader sent not an entry but a protest: "Do not woes of total war This week's competition bar? Who but in his own last breath Should be pardoned jokes on death?" Ruthless rhymes are essentially satires upon Man's indifference to the fate of others except in so far as this affects his personal convenience. Evidently jokes about death can all be thought in bad taste, but the fact that most of us have, during the last year, been in danger does not, as far as I can see, aggravate the offence; it merely increases the desire to make such jokes. I note that a rhyme about an undisposed bomb exploding comes from a member of a bomb-disposal unit, and one about a propeller killing somebody comes from an aerodrome. The number of competitors moreover constitutes, I am told, a record. I became a little tired after reading the sixtieth rhyme about using a body to manure the vegetable-plot, and the seventieth rhyme about cannibalism. I give a selection of the entries I happened to like best—the competition was not easy to judge. I recommend for first prize E. W. Fordham and for second, Nancy Gunter.

By U-boat sunk, in mid-Atlantic,
Eliza's howls for help were frantic;
But twelve men in the rescue boat
Left her to drown, or swim or float:
Their conduct may sound rather mean,
But after all, you know—thirteen!

Playing hookey, little Tom
Teased an unexploded bomb:
At the Pig and Whistle bar
They'd always said he would go far.
(Allan M. Laing)

When German bombers, circling o'er,
Smote Wren churches by the score,
Young Reggy cried "They're men of taste!
Regent Street is not defaced." (W.R.)

Young Bill, while walking by the river,
Fell in and disappeared forever.
We weep that Fate so blind can be,
He wasn't our evacuee. (Robby)

The engine-driver cleaned his wheels,
Still aghast at Uncle's squeals.
"Now," young Jimmy yelled, with glee,
"Uncle's not so big as me!" (Lamsilon)

Elaine, pretending it was salt,
Mixed powdered glass in Grandma's malt.
Her father cried, "O child abhorred!"—
She used his cherished Waterford.
(E. Aitken)

Uncle held the highest rank,
Got run over by a tank;
Strong and sad is my emotion,
Now I'll never get promotion.
(Mrs. J. M. South)

Master Reginald (aged four)
Baled out from the thirteenth floor.
His shroud will measure just a yard.
"Two coupons, Nannie, off *your* card!"

Landing from their parachutes
Huns raped Cousin Flo, the brutes!
"Cheer up, Flo!" exclaimed her mother,
"One man's very like another!" (H. P. B.)

Uncle, one of Auntie's failures,
She slew, and laid beneath the dahlias.
Remorseful now, she says, "Ah, verily,
He'd have been better for the celery."
(D. W. Barker)

"It's three No Trumps," the soldier said;
A sniper's bullet struck him dead.
His cards bedecked the trench's bottom.
A comrade peered—"Yes, he'd 'a' got 'em!"
(Guy Innes)

What are we to do with Jim?
He pushed Grandma down the quarry,
And he knows we're cross with him,
Yet he *will* not say he's sorry.
(R. E. Kitching)

Tommy shot Mamma for fun.
Father, as he cleaned the gun,
Said: "That's very wrong, my pet;
Cartridges are hard to get."
(L. V. Upward)

Mary on her wedding day
Caught a chill and passed away,
Mother moaned: "Alas, alack,
We must send the presents back!"
(Muriel Sly)

Clifford, cutting Father's throat,
Soaked in blood his Sunday coat.
Mother cried, with voice impassioned,
"Careless boy, when clothes are rationed."
(Stanley French)

A thoughtful child, my nephew Peter—
Took his sister, after luncheon,
Tied her to a chair and beat her
Senseless with a rubber truncheon.
He thought t'would interest her to know
The secrets of the Gestapo. (Eric)

With the greatest unconcern
Nero, fiddling, watched Rome burn.
"After all," he said aloud,
"Music's wasted on *that* crowd."
(R. S. Jaffray)

Damn a clumsy Flying Lieut.
Who can't release his parachute;
But give him due, to be impartial—
He landed on an Air Vice Marshal.
(R. D. W.)

Auntie, giggling in his face,
Always trumped poor George's ace.
Strange how old wells keep so clear.
A Fourth? Oh! *ring* the Vicar, dear.
(Mrs. E. T. Graham)

Straying near the prop, a Waaf
Managed to get cut in haaf;
"See, the wood's not even frayed,"
Jim said, as he wiped the blade.
(Stanley J. Sharpless)

Home-Guard Harry cleaned his gun;
Let it off and killed his son.
"My!" said Harry, "Ain't that good!
It does just what they said it would."
(J. C. B. Date)

Queueing for the weekly egg,
Jill fell down and broke her leg:
"What a bit of luck!" cried Jack,
"Suppose she'd fallen coming back!"
(William Bliss)

Squire Squint, shooting at a pheasant,
Hit instead a sitting peasant.
"Well," laughed Squire, "sport can't be stopped
Just because an H is dropped."
(G. J. Blundell)

FIRST PRIZE

Our bulldog ate the larger half
Of Aunt Matilda's ample calf:
I should, I trust, have been upset
Were dog food not so hard to get.

I was, I knew, the certain heir
Of father's wealthy sister;
I saw her strolling near my car,
I swerved and nearly missed her.

James, reposing on a bank,
Was rudely wakened by a tank;
The ground was soft, the tank was large,
So James was buried free of charge.
E. W. FORDHAM

SECOND PRIZE

Herbert, following a tiff
Pushed his sweetheart o'er a cliff,
Now his action he regrets,
She had got their cigarettes.

Careless Cuthbert threw a dart
Straight into a woman's heart;
Said her brother, "Now then, Stupid,
Who do you think *you* are—Cupid?"

"One of ours!" said know-all Ted,
Bombs came down and killed him dead;
Cried his wife with laughter merry
"There, I *said* it was a Jerry!"
NANCY GUNTER

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MR. H. ERIC MILLER'S SPEECH.

The thirty-third ordinary general meeting of Harrisons & Crosfield, Limited, will be held on October 28th in London.

The following are extracts from the address of the chairman, Mr. H. Eric Miller, to be presented at the meeting:—

In the balance sheet the loan of £200,000 to the British Government free of interest represents part of our taxation paid in advance. The company's total provision for taxation at home and abroad for the year, including the tax deducted from dividends, amounts to more than £500,000. It is gratifying to be able to make such a substantial contribution to the war effort of our own and of the Allied countries, and you will, I am sure, join with me in expressing our best thanks to the whole of the staff.

The net profit for the year of £350,161 shows an improvement of nearly £10,000 on last year's figure. The Board recommend the payment of a final dividend of 20 per cent. on the deferred ordinary stock, making 25 per cent. for the year. The sum to be carried forward will be £174,596—an increase of nearly £10,000 on last year.

As anticipated last October, the contract for the purchase of their 1941 requirements of Indian and Ceylon tea by the British Government was entered into through the Producers' Associations on terms similar to the 1940 contract. These arrangements have been mutually satisfactory.

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